Sahitya Akademi Awards: Books and Writers (1955-1978)

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A. D.
Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS: BOOKS AND WRITERS (1955-1978)



Sahitya Akademi

SAHITYA AKADEMI

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In the year 1955, the first Sahitya Akademi Awards were given to twelve Indian writers for their contribution to literature. Since then, the awards have become a regular annual feature; instead of twelve languages, they are now given to works in twenty-two and the award amount has risen from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 25,000.

The basic procedure for selecting works for the awards was devised when the Akademi was headed by such writers and statesmen as Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Dr. Abul Kalam Azad. This procedure has not, however, been deemed inflexible and, over the years, attempts have been made to free the selection procedure further from any posssibility of deviation from the highest standards of excellence. The procedure as it now stands consists of a three-tier process of selection made by scholars, critics and other writers.

In the first twenty-five years of the Sahitya Akademi's existence, that is upto 1978, awards were given to 15 works in Assamese, 21 in Bengali; 8 in Dogri; 10 in English; 20 in Gujarati; 23 in Hindi; 22 in Kannada; 10 in Kashmiri; 2 in Konkani; 10 in Maithili; 20 in Malayalam; 5 in Manipuri; 23 in Marathi; 2 in Nepali; 18 in Oriya; 18 in Punjabi; 5 in Rajasthani; 11 in Sanskrit; 12 in Sindhi; 19 in Tamil; 18 in Telugu and 19 in Urdu.

The Advisory Board of each language commissioned a well-known literary scholar of that language to review each of these 311 titles; in spite of our most assiduous persuasions, nine reviews – one each in Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, and Marathi, two in Telugu and three in Manipuri were not received and could not unfortunately be included. The reviews which are published here were scrutinized by each language Advisory Board as a preliminary to publication. The editorial responsibility is, therefore, divided, in a symbolically significant way, amongst some leading literary figures in each of the languages of India.

We envisage this volume as the first of a series and we hope that it will serve a long felt need to present a consolidated pictu of Sahitya Akademi's efforts in this area of our activities.

Indra Nath Chou

FOREWORD

Thomas Mann, when awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1929 referred to the "misgiving" which any writer must feel when receiving an award. This feeling of misgiving is only strengthened if the award also happens to come from a National Body; there is a lurking suspicion that support from Government-funded bodies necessarily goes together with heavy-handed insistence on conformity. Nowhere is this suspicion more dramatically articulated then by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, writer and statesman, who in his capacity as the first President of the Sahitya Akademi said in the first meeting of the General Council in 1954, that he was "afraid of the heavy-hand of the Government" as it might "retard the growth of literature."

This sensitivity to the writer's need for freedom was shared in equal measure by his fellow-writers and statesmen. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, to whom credit should go for Governmental funding for Sahitya Akademi and the institution of the annual National Awards, described the Government's role as being limited to that of a "curtain-raiser". In like vein, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, first Vice-President of the Akademi, asserted: "If we are to have creative literature in our country and not managed literature, it is essential that the Akademi should remain completely autonomous... No great literature can be produced unless Men have the courage to be lonely in their minds to be free in their thoughts and to express whatever occurs to them. Freedom of human spirit is the first essential of any kind of creative literature. That must be protected."

This commitment to protect the freedom of the writer is a basic, guiding tenet of the Sahitya Akademi. Every year, while announcing and presenting the annual Awards, we remind ourselves of it, anew. Our awards were instituted in 1954 in order to recognize the great works of literature and to encourage writers in the different Indian languages. In doing this publicly, we also bring to the notice of discerning readers in other languages, the achievements of fellow Indian writers. Our programme of translating award-winning books is a further step in this direction.

The procedure for the selection of books for awards has evolved over the years. It has been reviewed as many as six times in order to make it more responsive to the claims of literary merit in its freest and fullest manifestation. The traditional manner in which the presentation is made – the presentation ceremony followed on the next day by a 'Writers' Meet', where writers describe their creative experiences – provides an invaluable forum for literary interaction; in sharp focus are the contours, the colours, the interweaving textures of that multilingual phenomenon we call Indian literature.

The present volume, bearing reviews of books that received national awards over the first twenty-five years of the Sahitya Akademi's existence, is a record of our commitment to identify works of excellence and honour writers of eminence. Its release coincides with a historic occasion in the life of this organisation: the first Translation Prize-giving ceremony of the Sahitya Akademi. It is our hope that both the Sahitya Akademi Awards and the Translation Prizes will continue to flourish and long serve to provide recognition and incentive to writers and translators in India.

B.K. Bhattacharyya

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ASSAMESE

1955 Award

Jatindranath Dowerah

Bana Phul

Durga Prasad Misra and Sons, Calcutta; 1952; 10+86 pp.; Rs. 2.8.0

Jatindranath took to poetry in his college days. Soon he made his mark as a good poet and received wide popularity for his beautiful lyrics. *Bana Phul* (Wild Flower) is a volume of fifty poems of love and beauty. The themes that the poet delineates are reflected in his "Jivan Mahima" (Wonders of Life), "Duranir Sur" (The Distant Tune), "Silar Sapon" (The Dream of a Stone), "Melanir Dan" (The Gift in Parting), "Tomalai" (To You), "Ses Anurodh" (The Last Request), etc.

The poet has the gift of imagination and clear expression. Let us take a few lines from his poem "Gupta Bekat" (The Revelation).

The Flowers rose up
shunning the cover of
the leaves,
and they extended their
hearts in joy.
The butterflies peeping from
a corner came forth
and caroused the sweet
honey of love.

Dowerah has a romatic yearning for the beautiful. In the poem "Doorar Yatri" (The Traveller to the Distant Land) the poet dreams of flying with his love to some fairy land, far from the world of men. The poet's passionate longing to go to the distant land away from the troubles of the world speaks of his romantic sensibility. The longing to fly to a distant land, far from the world

of reality is a permanent longing in the hearts of all lovers in all ages and in all countries. "Siltiro Sapon Bhagel" (The Stone too had Lost its Dream) is perhaps an autobiographical narration of his love-life.

Dowerah's style of narration is very simple. The language used by him is drawn from real life. The pictorial effect of his images is very rich. Dowerah displays a rare skill in handling metrics, which is neither studied nor artificial. Verse comes naturally to him with a never failing sense of form.

Chandra Kataky

1960 Award

Benudhar Sarma

Kangrechar Kachiyali Ra'dat

Assam Jyoti, Gauhati; 1959; 76 pp.; Rs. 3.00

> "Sri Benudhar Sarma (b. 1896) has made his mark as an essayist, biographer and historian in his language. *Kangrechar Kachiyali Ra'dat*, which literally means 'In the Dawn of the Congress', is an account of the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement in Assam, and particularly in his own village, Charing, which was one of the important centres of political activity in those days. Written in chaste prose, the work is as remarkable for its literary quality as for its historical interest. The author's personal reminiscences and the intimate pen-portraits of the personalities who participated in the freedom-struggle add to its interest."

Written in an autobiographical vein, *Kangrechar Kachiyali Ra'dat* contains a neat picture of the part played by common men and women in the Non-Cooperation Movement in a rural area of the Sibsagar district in Assam. The author was the first to initiate the Non-Cooperation Movement in the village in 1921. He continued to work till the thirties, and saw the awakening of a spirit of resistance amongst the villagers of the locality against foreign rule.

Side by side, there was an urge for self-development. The book takes note of both the facets of the Movement, the agitation as well as the constructive work.

The narrative is couched in a light but realistic style and depicts the local setting of the struggle vividly. The vignettes of little men and women who made history silently and the episodes described have a fictional quality. All these are drawn from real life. The author not only wrote from his rich memory, but also used his note-books, which recorded every interesting local incident or experience of those glorious heroic days. The little heroes and heroines come alive not only through the narrative, but also through photographs, carefully preserved. The narrative is more humane than political.

No attempt is made to idealise the personalities depicted. The narrative tells how the opium-eaters gave up opium-eating, the rigours of untouchability was relaxed, the peasants took to hand-spinning and indigenous crafts, the women came out of seclusion and how folk culture was revived and given new content. Mahatma Gandhi is brought into the narrative occasionally, as a source of inspiration.

The narrative has an angle which scholastic accounts of the freedom movement or the popular histories emphasising the roles of leaders or the ideologies lack. This angle is that of the people, who struggled in their own way to achieve swaraj in terms of their daily life. For the author, the rustic Somdhar, the first villager who offered himself as a Non-Cooperation volunteer, is more important than Gandhi, and Sheikh Abdul, the Muslim comrade, is much more significant than Muhmmad Ali. It is these heroes that make history. Their struggle cannot be depicted fully unless the other side is visualised correctly. British officialdom is represented by the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Gunning, and their trade interests by the English tea garden managers. Side by side, the picture of Mr. Middleton, who contributed money for swarajist work, gives a balancing effect. The author describes jail life in interesting detail and adds a chapter on the reactions of a sensitive upper middle class friend to the campaign for swarajya.

The contents give us an insight into the mind and behaviour of rural people and middle level workers. They also focus our attention on the innate wisdom of peasants.

The book also possesses a remarkable prose style. Benudhar Sarma is known for his colloquial and racy style. His style endows

the narrative with a literary quality as well as wide audience appeal. It unifies diverse elements of contents–narrative, description, ideas and episodes into a whole. Of Sarma, it is often said that the style is the man. The book cannot be called a work of history or philosophy. However, the form approximates to the autobiographical mode, although the author focusses less on himself than on others. The truth is, that in the freedom movement, the self and the other got merged with each other to a great extent. The 'We' of the narrative is therefore indistinguishable from the 'I'.

B.K. Bhattacharyya

1961 Award

Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya

Iyaruingam

Lawyers Book Stall, Gauhati; 1960; 516 pp.; Rs. 6.00

> "Sri Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya (b. 1924) is one of the leading novelists of Assam. *Iyaruingam* is a novel depicting the social life of the Nagas against the background of the last World War. The author's intimate knowledge of tribal people and his deep insight into human emotions have made this work an outstanding contribution in the field of Assamese fiction."

Iyaruingam is a moving tale of a section of the Naga people with their resurgent hopes and aspirations for a better way of life in an independent political unit. More precisely, it is based on what is popularly called the Naga uprising which ultimately d to the formation of the present state of Nagaland. The e is the then Naga hills district, particularly its headquarters, ohima, and its suburbs, and the time, a little after the Second World War with all its scars still green in the mind of man and the contour of the land. The writer has gone into the issue in all its basic details. How far can a small community like the Nagas notwithstanding its warlike character, fulfil its political destiny in total independence of the rest of the country?

P. Kotoky

1964 Award

Birinchi Kumar Barua

Asamar Lok-Sanskriti

Srimati Shanti Chhaya Barua: Gauhati; 1961; 375 pp.; Rs. 12.00

"Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua (1910-64) was a distinguished Assamese scholar, historian, educationist and author whose brilliant and versatile career was unfortunately cut short. Born in 1910 in Nowgong (Assam), Dr. Barua received his higher

education at the University of Calcutta, and later at the University of London where he got his Doctorate of Philosophy. A learned and devoted student of the history, geography, language, literature and folklore of Assam, Dr. Barua published pioneering works in these branches, and achieved great distinction as Professor of Assamese and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Gauhati University. In 1963 he was invited to the USA as a visiting professor, and lectured on Indian folklore at Indiana University.

As a creative writer, his achievement was no less. He started writing short stories while still a student and later published two novels, *Jivanar Batat* and *Seuji Patar Kahini*, which won high praise from discriminating critics. He has been actively associated with the Sahitya Akademi since its inception and was a member of its General Council and Executive Board. The Award book, *Asamar Lok-Sanskriti*, first published in 1961, has been hailed as a monumental work of research in folklore, and as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Assamese literature."

Asamar Lok-Sanskriti clearly reflects the author's serious concern with the folklore heritage of the country in general and the region in particular, backed by his first-hand acquaintance with folklore theories and methodologies developed abroad. It is a comprehensive handbook of folklore and folk life dealing not only with folk literature but also with such diverse fields as folk beliefs and customs, speech, cookery, costumes, musical instruments, dance, architecture, arts and crafts, and so forth. What makes the book worthwhile is that, apart from giving a judiciously culled mass of information, the various chapters also explain the significance of the material in the socio-cultural context. The book contains information relating to various ethnic groups not only of what constitutes Assam today but also of other parts of the region that earlier formed parts of the state, such as, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. The Appendix consisting of two parts, is also of considerable importance: the first part contains a list of topics and items, which could not be included in the book as planned, as well as suggestions and guidelines for further collection and publication of material; the second part, which runs into as many as 115 pages

contains art plates with valuable photographs and sketches representing various aspects of the traditional life and lore of the land.

Birendranath Datta

1966 Award

Ambikagiri Roychoudhury

Bedanar Ulka

Atmabikash Bhavan, Gauhati; 1964; 76 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"The late Ambikagiri Roychoudhury (1885-1967) was a distinguished Assamese poet and author. Born in a poor family steeped in tradition at Barpeta, an important centre of Vaishnavism, he could not proceed beyond the secondary stage in education. A rebel by nature and a free-thinker, he actively sympathised with the revolutionary patriotic movement of the day and was interned in his home town for a number of years. He also took active part in the Non-Cooperation struggle in 1920 and was sentenced to jail for three years. Later, he founded the *Asam Samrakshini Sabha* to uphold civil liberties. It was converted into *Asam Jatiya Mahasabha* in 1935, for which he edited a weekly news bulletin *Deka Asam* for several years. He was also the founder-editor of the literary monthly, *Chetana*.

A poet from his childhood, Sri Roychoudhury excelled in patriotic fervour and national sentiments which he expressed in exquisite verse. His poetic compositions were an inspiration to his people, though they brought on him the wrath of the ruling authorities. Some of his poems composed in prison were translated into English and published as *Songs from the Cell*. Besides poetry, Sri Roychoudhury wrote a number of works in prose which too is marked by patriotic and missionary fervour. He was also a musician and has a number of songs to his credit.

The Award book, *Bedanar Ulka*, is the latest collection of his poems which bear testimony to his maturity of expression and depth of feeling. For their passionate championing of national progress and faith in the higher values of life, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Assamese literature."

In *Bedanar Ulka* there are forty-seven lyrics and songs replete with patriotic fervour and democratic enthusiasm for humanity. Being an ardent nationalist, his heart bleeds when he sees that corruption, meanness and inequality are rampant in the country and lust for power and status has swallowed up men's humanity. He says:

Ordinarily moral character has flown away
The dirt of corruptible debauchery increased in the country
(He Bhagavan; He Bhagavan)

Thus, his is a relentless crusade against numerous evils of the country. In some poems he advises the people to shake off sloth and face the stern realities of life which is beset with difficulities. Even in celebrating the national festivals like Bihu, he appeals to the Assamese people not to be callous about various burning problems of national life. In one poem he rebukingly questions, "Which do you want–curse of death or blessings of life?" He believes in the efficacy of spiritual force and says that self-realisation is the ultimate thing without which life becomes directionless and miserable.

He has dedicated his life to the service of the country; his motto is "Service is my symbol." This idea is expressed in poems like "Jeevanar Prayojan" and "Moi Jeevanneetik-Manavneetik."

Without conforming to prosodic and metrical rules, the poet has achieved a poetic and universal content which compares favourably with the best poets. In *Bedanar Ulka*, Ambikagiri has tried to democratise and universalise certain ideas much ahead of his time.

Jatindranath Goswami

1967 Award

Trailokya Nath Goswami

Adhunik Galpa Sahitya

Sharma Brothers and Company, Nalbari; 1965; 259 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"Sri Trailokya Nath Goswami (b. 1906) is a distinguished short story writer and critic. Born in Nalbari in the district of Kamrup, Sri Goswami received his higher education at Calcutta University. Charged with a deep social consciousness, he was soon drawn into the field of literary writing and wrote a number of short stories depicting the misery and oppression of ordinary people under a foreign yoke in a stagnant society. His collections of short stories, *Auma* and *Marichika*, both published in 1948, attracted the attention of all discerning critics for their power and fervour.

A teacher by profession, Sri Goswami has made a serious and deep study of literary art, particulary of the art of the short story. His critical essays collected in the work *Sahitya Alochana* (1950) are marked by his sincerity of approach and objectivity of judgement. Being well-versed in English and Sanskrit, he has successfully attempted to assimilate literary theories of the east and the west and his approach to contemporary literature is notable for its catholicity and balance. This has endeared him to the writers of all generations and has given him a respected place among present-day Assamese critics.

The Award book, *Adhunik Galpa Sahitya,* is a critical study of the theory and practice of the art of short story writing, with particular reference to contemporary Assamese literature, and is the outcome of painstaking erudition spread over more than a decade. For its deep insight into the creative process, for its poise in comparative evaluation and for its lucidity of style, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Assamese literature."

What is a short story? Does the study of short stories in English (including those translated into Assamese from other languages) or in Assamese enable us to arrive at any definition? How many kinds of short stories are there? The book discusses these questions in an analytical manner, and adds a long chapter on the development of the short story in Assamese, pinpointing therein the achievement of individual authors right from L.N. Bezboruah to Sneha Devi. The long chapter is preceded by a short chapter on the short stories of Rabindranath and Premchand. The author evidently chose two representative Indian short story writers to give us an insight into the development of Indian story-writing in the early period of modernisation.

The importance of the book in the history of Assamese literature is clear. It is the first systematic account of the development of Assamese short story-writing in a historical perspective. As ideas about the short story were imported from the west, a brief excursion into the development of the genre in the west was necessary. The author first states the general principles of short story-writing, differentiates between ancient and modern forms, and discusses their characteristics. The first chapter defines the short story, discusses its nature and the various approaches which a writer can adopt towards short story-writing. He talks of four approaches :

1. the writer (narrator), who remains outside, delineates the character through unfolding of events in appropriate setting and retains the right to air his views;
2. the writer adopts the standpoint of the main character and delineates events accordingly;
3. the writer may adopt the viewpoint of a subsidiary character;
4. the writer may allow events to unfold themselves, keeping himself anonymous.

In the second chapter, he discusses some select western masters covering a vast field from Edgar Allan Poe to Albert Camus.

While these chapters bear a certain ideological relationship to the chapter on the Assamese short story, the author does not treat them merely as background materials. The author's main theme is the modern short story irrespective of the language in which it is written. His approach is

more literary than sociological. Throughout the book he maintains that a unity of outlook rests primarily on what the author considers to be the general characteristics of the modern short story. This certainly gives the regional readers an opportunity to judge Assamese short stories in a universal ideological framework.

The book fulfils a contemporary need in Assamese literature to understand the concept of modernisation in relation to short story-writing during a specific period, beginning from the last decade of the last century to the sixties of the present century. Moreover, this is a pioneering work of historical and aesthetical values.

B.K.Bhattacharyya

1968 Award

Nalinibala Devi

Alakananda

Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat; 1967; 255 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"Smt. Nalinibala Devi (b. 1898) was born at Gauhati in an illustrious family with a long tradition of learning and scholarship, and she grew up in an atmosphere of intellectual and artistic activity. Under the able guidance of her father, the late Nabinchandra Bardoloi, popularly known as 'Karmavir' for his participation in the freedom movement, she soon acquired proficiency not only in Assamese and Bengali but also in Sanskrit and English, besides music and painting. She started writing verse very early and her first poems appeared in periodicals when she was barely ten. Since then several collections of her poems have been published, besides poetical plays and biographies for children.

A distinguished poet of modern Assam, Smt. Nalinibala Devi has received many honours and distinctions. In

1957 the President of India conferred on her the title of Padmashri.

The Award book, *Alakananda*, is the latest collection of her poems on a variety of themes. Sweet and simple in tone, warm and sincere in feeling, they are permeated with spiritual sensibility and a sense of mystic wonder. For its intensity of feeling and freshness of expression the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Assamese literature."

Alakananda is an anthology of 144 songs and 50 lyrics. In it, the poet Nalinibala has expressed her state of mind, her eagerness, vigilance and quest in the realisation of the eternal Beauty in her own mystic soul. In the first song "Namo Sundar Nirupam", she says that she has worshipped the Beauty in her heart without any offering. In all the songs of the book, the poet speaks of how she was wistfully waiting for the 'spark from heaven' or for the Supreme moment when she will have communion with the Supreme Being who is the origin of all the beauties of the world. Aspiring to achieve divine communion she conceives herself to be the lady-love (Uma or Abhisarika) or the lover or Dhurjati in the lyric "Jibanak Karo Manorama." Eternal Beauty cannot be realised unless the heart is cleansed–purging desire, aspiration and conceit. It is sheer ignorance that instead of seeking in 'the heart within', we try to find Him in the world ("Eaikhan Sankarar Des"). In "Biswasur", the poet has heard the familiar tune coming from across the sea where the horizon merges with the blue sea. She would like to go there in a golden raft. Her patriotic fervour finds expression in poems like "Eaikhan Sankarar Des", "Oati Maramar Mor Eaikhani Des", "Nilachal", "Bijayini Bharatar Nai Parayaya", etc. Nalinibala has also paid tributes to Rabindranath Tagore who has influenced her to some extent. In short, the exquisite songs and lyrics of *Alakananda* may be called a pointer to Nalinibala's yearning and earnestness to have divine communion with the eternal or the Supreme Being. *Alakananda* is a distinct contribution to Assamese mystic poetry.

Jatindranath Goswami

1969 Award

Atul Chandra Hazarika

Manchalekha

Lokendranath Medhi, Gauhati; 1967; xviii+642 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Atul Chandra Hazarika (b. 1906) is a distinguished dramatist, scholar and educationist. Born at Latashil in the district of Gauhati, Assam, Sri Hazarika received his higher education at Gauhati and Calcutta Universities. Besides literature he has also had training in teaching and law, and has been working as Lecturer and Professor of Assamese at Gauhati.

Sri Hazarika has made a significant contribution in the field of drama through his study of the theatre in Assam from its beginning to the present day. He has also achieved considerable success in other fields of literary writing, specially in writing for children. A veteran author, the number of his published works is over 50.

The Award book, *Manchalekha*, is a detailed study of the theatre in Assam in its many aspects and bears witness to Sri Hazarika's prodigious and painstaking industry in collecting a vast volume of material to make his study of the Assamese stage and theatre as comprehensive as possible. For its pioneering achievement in this field and for the ease and flow of its narrative, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Assamese literature."

Manchalekha is a comprehensive chronicle of Assamese theatre from 1468 to 1967. A prolific and popular playwright, Hazarika's account, based as it is, on his long association with the stage is both authentic and illuminating. His great passion for the theatre inspired him to get in touch with theatre workers in every nook and corner of Assam and naturally it took him ten years of hard

labour to give the final touches to this encyclopaedic treatise.

In six parts, Hazarika has discussed the pioneering efforts of the Vaisnava saint Sri Sankaradeva, who in 1468, enacted the first Assamese drama *Chihnajatra*, the contributions of the Sattras, the theatrical activities of the modern period where playwrights struggled to discover their own form of writing, the impact of music and dance on the stage, musical plays and the one-act form, radio-plays and films. He has also highlighted the contributions of the illustrious persons who helped to promote the theâtre movement in Assam. In the seventh part he has incorporated the photographs of most of these stalwarts.

Hazarika's cogent, clear and idiomatic style bears a lively personal flavour which has made this impressive volume intensely interesting. Combining scholarship and practical experience Hazarika has made *Manchalekha* a classic in the domain of Assamese literature.

Satya Prasad Barua

1970 Award

Lakshminath Phookan

Mahatmar Pora Rupkonwarloi

Nalini Prakash, Calcutta; 1969; 210 pp.; Rs. 9.00

"Sri Lakshminath Phookan (b. 1897) is a distinguished journalist and author in Assamese. Born in Dergaon in the Sibsagar district of Assam, Sri Phookan has been a journalist all his life. Besides being associated with *Forward*, a journal run by the late C.R. Das and *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Sri Phookan has served in a number of periodicals from Assam, both in Assamese and in English. He was the first editor of *Assam Tribune* which appeared as a weekly in 1939 and was later converted into a daily. After 25 years of devoted service he retired from the daily in 1964.

Gifted with a restless pen Sri Phookan has also applied his talents to creative writing. His first collection of short stories entitled *Mala* (1918) was published when he was barely 25 years old and was an immediate success. Since then he has published a number of short story collections and also a collection of poems entitled *Sonali Sopan*. He is held in high esteem by the writers and intellectuals of his language.

The Award book, *Mahatmar Pora Rupkonwarloi*, is a volume of reminiscences first published in 1969. It contains essays and sketches about some of the outstanding personalities of modern India with whom Sri Phookan came in personal contact during the course of his long career. For its keenness of observation, richness of material and lucidity of style, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Assamese literature."

Mahatmar Pora Rupkonwarloi is a collection of seventeen pieces of autobiographical reminiscences. In these essays, the author pays warm tributes to Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and fifteen other eminent personalities in the field of Assamese literature, art, culture, journalism, politics and business, with whom he came into personal contact at different times in the course of his 50 years long, chequered and struggling career of a poet-turned-journalist, working at the editorial desk of several periodicals and daily newspapers at Calcutta, Guwahati and Dibrugarh in succession (and also making an unsuccessful attempt to join the Independence struggle). He finally retired as the Editor of *Assam Tribune*, the first English daily published from Assam, and settled down at Guwahati.

In all these essays Phookan projects the human qualities of each personality he dealt with and also relates frankly the story of his own successes and failures in his long career as a pioneer journalist. All these reminiscences of Phookan are a valuable addition to the treasury of Indian literature.

—Ajit Kumar Sharma

1972 Award

Syed Abdul Malik

Aghari Atmar Kahini

Gauhati Book Stall, Gauhati; 1969; 6+166 pp.; Rs. 4.50

"Sri Syed Abdul Malik (b. 1919) was born in the village Naharani in Assam and obtained the degree of Master of Arts in Assamese language and literature. He then entered the teaching profession and has served as a school teacher and a college lecturer besides working in All India Radio for some time. He is now Professor and Head of the Assamese Department at J.B. College, Jorhat.

A versatile writer, Sri Malik began writing short stories in 1935 and has by now more than 50 publications to his credit which include novels, plays, short stories, travelogues, poems and research works besides translations. He has been closely associated with the progressive movement in art and literature and was Vice-President of the Indian People's Theatre Association. He received the Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1965.

The Award book, *Aghari Atmar Kahini*, is his latest novel first published in 1969, and depicts the loneliness of a noble soul caught up in the web of modern life. For its insight into the working of the human mind and its lucid prose style, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Assamese literature."

Aghari Atmar Kahini unfolds the theme of social disintegration and the loss of sense of belonging at the individual level in post-Independence Assamese society.

The story portrays the process of gradual disintegration in the family of an ex-minister, Manmath Chowdhury, a process which is symbolic of disintegration at a larger social level. The corrupting power of Manmath Chowdhury is reflected in his physical exploitation of Aparajita's mother, a poor and helpless widow and in the way he ruins the life and character of Aparajita. Aparajita's subsequent marriage to a political idealist, Niranjan Khound, only leads to a broken home. Sasanka Chowdhury, who seems to suffer

from a guilty conscience early in his life, chooses the path of rebellion and self-reliance.

Malik has filled his novel with a series of characters – all of whom are frustrated, and disappointed in their search for significant and fruitful relationships. The true significance of this novel, therefore, must be appreciated in the larger background of post-Independence Assamese society with the accumulation of power and money by individuals and the associated evil of corruption.

Malik's unfailing narrative power and its hold on the readers is as much in evidence in this novel as in his other novels. Right from the start when Sasanka becomes the guest of Aparajita, the story moves on at a fast pace, and in a series of flashbacks, their past is revealed till the narrative leads to a dramatic end.

The characterisation in the novel has been subtly done with the introduction of elements of psychological interest: Sasanka's feelings of guilt, Aparajita's inferiority complex because of her physical deformity, Niranjan's frustration arising out of the knowledge of his wife's questionable antecedents, Chhaya's desperate attitude because of her unknown parentage–all these have added psychological motives to their actions and behaviour.

The language and style adopted in this novel have a distinctly racy and unembellished quality which distinguish it from Malik's usually florid and verbose style found in his other novels.

Emdad Ullah

1974 Award

Saurabh Kumar Chaliha

Golam

Bani Prakash, Gauhati; 1973; 168 pp.; Rs. 2.50

"Sri Saurabh Kumar Chaliha, distinguished short story writer in Assamese, was educated at Gauhati and London Universities. He is Assistant Professor of Physics at Gauhati. His literary career began during his school days and he was

1977 Award

Anand Chandra Barua

Bakul Banar Kavita

Assam Prakashan Parishad, Gauhati; 1976; 216 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Sri Anand Chandra Barua, distinguished Assamese poet and playwright, was born in 1907 at Khoomtai Tea Estate, Moran, in Assam. After his matriculation in 1926, he joined Kashi Viswa Vidyala but abandoned his studies to join the Freedom Movement. Beginning his career as a journalist, he joined the then Royal Air Force in the Accounts Department, but was released from war-service in 1946. He retired in 1968 from Industrial Training Institute, Jorhat. Sri Barua, who has a number of collections of verses, plays and translations to his credit, is also a cultural worker and an amateur actor. He has been a President of the Asam Sahitya Sabha and in 1962 his poem on Rabindranath Tagore won him a gold medal.

Bakul Banar Kavita is considered an outstanding contribution to Assamese literature for its human warmth, keen observation of man and nature, lucid diction and chaste style."

Bakul Banar Kavita is an anthology of 100 poems written on different topics. The first poem entitled "Prithibir Preme Mok Dewaliya Karile" (Love of the World Made Me Insolvent) may be called the essence of the poet's attitude towards life. In it, he says that he has emptied his store in worshipping Beauty like a devotee, and that universal love has reduced him to a pauper like an immobile boat. His humanism and quest for beauty left him stranded. He feels the heart-throbbing of prostitutes ("Gonikar Bedana") and widows ("Balika Bidhabar Ukti"). The mystic element may be discerned in some of his poems because he believes that in every natural object there is a reflection of the living God ("Jiban", "Prarthana", etc.). His *moi* (self) is a continuous immortal thing, without an end or beginning. The Sufi poet Hafiz left an indelible impression upon him, and the poem "Hafiz Aru Moi" bears testimony to it. In some poems such as "Dihar Swapna", "Saratar Sur", "Rupar Nao", etc. the poet reflects on some

splendours of the natural world. Wordsworthian by temperament, he is equally captivated by the fascinating scenery of Shillong ("Shillongar Smriti") and the charms of the Spring ("Basanta Bahar").

The poet's reveries find expression in "Kabir Sapon", "Manorama", "Kandari", "Jiban Madhuri", etc. His yearning for his lady-love is expressed in some poems ("Premar Karane", "Ahoitukiprem", etc.). His patriotic fervour finds expression in poems like "Eaia Amar Bharatbarsa", "Nayan Singh", "Punarjanma", etc. He has paid tributes to Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda, Jawaharlal Nehru, etc. In one poem "Roba, Alar Apekhya Kara", he has asked the people to eschew hatred and to follow the teachings of the Scriptures in order to foster world unity. In this book, Anand Chandra rises to his full stature.

Jatindranath Goswami

1978 Award

Homen Borgohain

Pita Putra

Sree Bhumi Publishing Company, Calcutta; 1975; 362 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Homen Borgohain, distinguished Assamese novelist, essayist and writer of short stories, was born at Dhakuakhana in Assam in 1932. He graduated with Honours in English from Cotton College, Gauhati, in 1954. Joining the Assam Civil Service in 1955, he served in various capacities before resigning from Government service in 1968 over his publishing a book of political satire. He is now the editor of *Nagarik*, a news-magazine that he founded. A member of several learned and literary bodies in Assam, Sri Borgohain has five novels, six collections of short stories and two anthologies of his essays to his credit. His Sahitya Akademi Award-winning novel has also received the Assam Publication Board Award in 1975.

Pita Putra is considered an outstanding contribution to Assamese literature for its authentic portrayal of the conflict of generations, the gradual disintegration of the family and society, powerful narrative and convincing characterisation."

Pita Putra is an incisive social novel depicting the transition of the remote Mohghuli village from the grinding poverty of British days to even worse penury and moral degradation in the years after freedom. The village comes to vivid life with all its smells, the vibrant beat of Bihu drums, the lissome curves of dancing maidens and the raucous brawls of drunken youths. Against this background emerge the central characters: the stern patriarch Sibanath Phuken, his care-worn but devoted wife, and their three rebel sons. The inevitable conflicts constitute the main theme of the novel and contribute to its power and poignancy.

Sibnath is the contemplative landlord of culture and compassion. His obsession with his heritage, his social position and his sense of being indispensible to the community fuels his irrational self-esteem. The tragic essence of the novel lies in his inability to come to terms with the changing times where the feudal order has crumbled in the vain quest for an egalitarian dispensation. He renounces his eldest son Gaurinath, a rebel against authority, for daring to marry beneath his caste. The youngest, Lakshminath, a rebel against life itself, ends up as a drunken bully. His second son Kalinath, who has forsaken his studies to save his home and village, is a rebel against society. His career and his love for Bohagi are sacrificed at the altar of filial obligation. But his crusade against the moral degeneration of the village ends in disillusion and frustration.

The author's masterly protrayal of a fast-changing rural society, his consummate skill in the delineation of character and his sensitive analysis of the human psyche, invest the novel with exceptional power and beauty. The only weakness of the novel is its ending. Major conflicts are left unresolved and the novel closes with unconvincing dialectic.

D.N. Bezbaruah

BENGALI

1955 Award

Jeebanananda Das

Shrestha Kavita

Navana, Calcutta; 1954; 136 pp.

Jeebanananda Das was closely linked with the progressive literary journals of the twenties and the thirties. He is regarded as a Bengali poet endowed with deep sensibilities and a profound insight into life. Spiritually attuned to his home town (now in Bangladesh), he considered himself an integral part of the flora and fauna of that water-bound area of the country and composed a series of amazingly beautiful sonnets which were published posthumously in book-form entitled *Rupasi Bangla* (Bangla, the Beautiful). These sonnets were recited by hundreds of young Bengalees on both sides of the border (especially by the East Bengalees at the time of the struggle for their liberation). But Jeebanananda Das knew with no less sensibility the dark, crumpled and agonized facets of human life, facets that were manifest in the city of Calcutta during the years of the Second World War and the Bengal famine.

As the years move on, the position of Jeebanananda as the Bengalee poet next only to Tagore is accepted unhesitatingly. Besides poetry, he has left behind some short stories, two short novels and several essays on criticism, all of which have been published posthumously.

Some idea of his poetical talent may be indicated, however faintly, by the fragment rendered below into English:

For a thousand years I have been trudging along the roads of this earth.
From the Sea of Ceylon to the Malayan Sea, in the darkness of nights;
I have wandered much in the shadowy worlds of Bimbisar and Ashoka;

I was there and farther still in the city of Bidarbha in
darkness;
Mine is a weary soul, around me are the foamy waves of life's
seas,
Yet, for a couple of hours, I enjoyed peace in the company
of Banalata Sen of Natore.

Amalendu Bose

1956 Award

Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay

Arogya Niketan

Bengal Publishers, Calcutta; 1955; 414 pp.; Rs. 6.0.0

Arogya Niketan, regarded as one of the best novels of Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay, deals with the confrontation between two medical doctors of completely different attitudes. One believes in the old Ayurvedic treatment and the other is a typical modern medical practitioner much alert to the fast-growing science. To Jiban Mahasay, the traditional Ayurvedic believer, a doctor is like a yogi whose philosophical knowledge is not simply a knowledge of the Ayurveda but a deep insight into the knowledge of the Ultimate. Prodyot, the young medical practitioner, on the other hand, fights out against the diseases with the latest know-how and looks beyond the individual patient to serve a greater cause: social welfare.

One can pick up from the story three distinctive types of life and death relationship. People like Rana Pathak, the *sanyasi* of the Mahapith, Bhuban Ray and Ganesh Bayen accept death calmly. On the other hand, Banabihari, son of Jiban Mahasay, mother of Moti,. Manjari–the first love of Jiban Mahasay and Ghosal–all these are too busy to enjoy life to its last dregs before death. In between these two types, one has another type, particularly Bipin, who is ashamed to face an untimely death. In all, we get a glimpse of the rhythmic varieties of the flicker of life, stricken by disease and death.

Disease and death have to such an extent pervade the whole of the novel that if Jiban Mahasay is the hero of the story then who could be the heroine except rapacious, red-haired Death, who keeps her destructive seed in the inmost core of each and every life, and who has been constantly and intensely searched for by Jiban Mahasay till the end of the story. Of course, there are other characters, but they have only helped to develop the character of the protagonist in his venture to explore the mystery of death.

Told in flashback the story gives us, rather over dramatically, several glimpses of the erotic ventures of the young Jiban Mahasay in the past and comes down to the present to create a contrast between his successful medical career and his inner frustration.

Confrontation between the two generations, old and new, is a favourite theme of most of Tarasankar's fictions and *Arogya Niketan* is no exception. As in other cases, here also, Tarasankar's sympathy is for the older generation. Through the tragic death of Jiban Mahasay he intends to project life as a long and devoted search for death which eludes the searcher at every step.

Ujjal Kumar Majumdar

1957 Award

Premendra Mitra

Sagar Theke Phera

Indian Associated Publishing Co., Calcutta; 1956; 7+57 pp.; Rs. 3.8.0

"Sri Premendra Mitra (b. 1904) is a leading poet, short story writer and essayist of contemporary Bengal. His writings reflect his deep and passionate sympathy for the poor and the underdog and are marked by depth of thought and distinction of style."

Premendra Mitra is a modern poet with great talent for sustained creative activities. He has played a pioneering role in the post-Tagore

history of Bengali poetry. As a poet, his response to modernity lies in his patient sympathy for the poor and the oppressed, the desolate and the ruined. He has had a tendency to address himself to the task of speaking out for the lower substratum of society. This new conviction has made Premendra Mitra a new voice in Bengali poetry. Added to this, his explicitly uncommon love for adventure and Bohemianism has reinforced his modern posture, because his poetic crusades release a sense of freedom and aggressiveness in the otherwise placid and inert Bengali mind. It makes us taste his cosmic range of imagination, even if it sometimes sounds like the craving of an adolescent. What is notable in the ultimate analysis is the poet's staunch faith in man's ambition, his assertive protest and dissent against man's frustration and despair, and his undying dreams for man's social salvation.

In *Sagar Theke Phera*, we find no shift in Premendra Mitra's dominant moods and attitudes. His commitment to a set of values, a vision of the world and a model of social experiences have survived the period since their enunciation in *Prathama* (1932). His urbanity has, in the meantime, attained institutional implication and refinement, but he still harbours a feeling for a wilderness that has not been curbed or tempered (vide poems like "Shahar", "Dupur", "Roder Prarthana", etc.). As before, love has a role in his poetry, but in no case is it a major role to be exercised intensively. *Sagar Theke Phera* is certainly a more perfected work than the earlier ones with, of course, no conceptual innovations.

Symbol is frequently used in Premendra Mitra's poems as an artistic construct for communication. In *Sagar Theke Phera* the poet chooses *sagar* (sea) to represent the vast expanse of life and/or the boundless horizon. In the treatment of myths, the poet strives for new interpretations. He seeks in Rama an agency for self-introspection, in *Dashanana*, an all-seeing idol for the search of truth. Though symbol and myth in Premendra Mitra's present volume tend to have private implications, they are quite intelligible. His verse-making, both formal and non-formal, speaks of his restraint and maturity.

Jibendra Sinha Roy

1958 Award

'Parashuram' (Rajashekhar Bose)

Anandibai Ityadi Galpa

M.C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta; 1957; 164 pp.; Rs. 3.0.0

> "Sri Rajashekhar Bose, better known by his literary pseudonym 'Parashuram' (b. 1880), born in Brahmanpade, Burdwan district is a versatile scholar, as much at home in Applied Chemistry as in Sanskrit classics, author of a standard dictionary of spoken Bengali, and best known and loved for his inimitable humour which places his short stories in a class by themselves."

Parashuram came on the literary scene, a bit late, with his first immortal story, *Birinchibaba* (1924). In *Anandibai Ityadi Galpa* (Anandibai and Other Short Stories), the butt of his satire is a type of person or a class. His satire is indirect, cool, witty and detached. In the stories of this book he scoffs at the social behaviour of his characters, who represent a cross-section of current Indian society. Parashuram's axe remains active all through in the collection. In the first story, "Anandibai", he satirises Trikramdas, a lascivious middleaged businessman, who sports with marriage, even after the passing of the Hindu Code Bill. Another character, Bateswar Sikdar, a rich and popular novelist in "Bateswarer Abadan" (Bateswar's Contribution), does not hesitate a whit to change the plot of his newly-written story at the prospect of having it screened. His story, "Dui Sinha" (Two Lions), is a satire on the malice and rivalry of two literary lions, backed by the editors of two rival periodicals. In "Gagan-Choti" (Heavenly Slipper), the writer satirises individuals, groups, and even nations, in the background of widespread consternation caused by the appearance of a new heavenly body. The theme of this story reminds us of H.G. Wells' *The Star*. The vanity of people in modern society becomes his object of obloquy in the story "Satyasandha Vinayak" (Veracious Vinayak), where Vinayak breathes his premature last in his bid to follow truth. In the concluding line of the story ('No, we've no reason to feel remorse'), the writer lashes out against the deceit in contemporary life. For the varying situations of his stories, Parashuram moves from the modern to

the past and the puranic world. Some of his stories in the volume wear a puranic attire to attract our satirical attention to some ever-existing maladies of the human race, and the stories, "Nirmok Nritya" (Slough Dance), "Yayatir Jara" (Yayati's Decrepitude) and "Dambaru Pandit" (Dambaru, the Scholar) may be referred to here. In the delineation of characters, the writer uses the narrative as well as the dramatic method. With a few masterly strokes of the brush he portrays his characters, and they are the proud possessions in our literary album.

Apurba Kumar Ray

1959 Award

Gajendra Kumar Mitra

Kalkatar Kachhei

Indian Associated Publishing Company, Calcutta; 1957; 290 pp.; Rs. 6.00

> "Sri Gajendra Kumar Mitra (b. 1908 in Calcutta) is a novelist, short story writer, playwright and journalist. Author of forty published volumes of novels and short stories and twenty volumes of juvenilia. Editor:*Katha Sahitya,* a literary monthly."

Kalkatar Kachhei is a remarkable novel characterised by an unrelenting but not ungenerous sort of realism that enables the reader to visualise vividly both the social milieu and the persons depicted in it. It represents the gradual disintegration of lower middle class life in Bengal, especially in the villages adjacent to the city of Calcutta –a life which once possessed a modest but unmistakable norm of culture and dignity–brought about by the impact of urban life on a comparatively conservative and unsophisticated society.

The subject matter of the novel, thus, is human suffering caused by poverty, erosion of old values, and a vain striving for unattainable ideals. The real tragedy, however, lies deeper in the debasement of individual character and loss of social integrity.

It is the women who suffer most, and the novel may well be described as a saga of suffering women. All the important characters

are women; it is a novel without a hero. There are only two male characters who deserve any attention–Naren, a villainous vagabond, and Abhayapada, rather an enigmatic young man who, though not without softer feelings, is inspired solely by a stern desire to get on in life.

The story revolves around the figure of Rashmani, a dignified lady of aristocratic lineage who has fallen on evil days, and it is the tragic vicissitudes in the lives of her three daughters that form the staple of the book. The heroine is Shyama, the eldest of the three, and her struggles to rehabilitate herself often reach a truly tragic intensity.

It is a book which, once read, cannot easily be forgotten and to which the reader returns again and again

J.N. Chakrabartti

1961 Award

Sashi Bhushan Dasgupta

Bharater Sakti-Sadhana O Sakta-Sahitya

Sahitya Samsad, Calcutta; 1960; 432 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Dr. Sashi Bhushan Dasgupta (b. 1911) is a distinguished scholar and Professor and Head of the Department of Modern Indian languages, Calcutta University. *Bharater Sakti-Sadhana O Sakta-Sahitya* is a historical and philosophical study of the Sakti cult in India. The work is as remarkable for its wealth of scholarship and critical acumen as for the excellence of its prose-style."

Bharater Sakti-Sadhana O Sakta-Sahitya is an indispensable book for anybody interested in a fairly comprehensive survey of the Sakti-cult in India and Sakta literature. The author is aware of the fact that there are two important aspects of the subject : historical and spiritual, and he handles both with remarkable competence discreetly leaving out those areas where he thinks he is inadequately equipped.

The author assiduously traces some interesting manifestations of the Sakti-cult even in Vaisnava religion and literature particularly

in the growth of Sri Radha as an image. The theory of Sakti, the author holds, does not belong to any particular sect; it is an independent philosophical theory.

Durga appears in the *Ramayana* as the slaying of Ravana would not be possible without the help of the mother goddess. In Sanskrit literature the goddess is largely humanized. *Kumarasambhavam* by Kalidasa presents one of the finest images of Uma. In the Mangal Kavyas of medieval Bengal the most significant change is the complete domestication of the divinities. The majestic Mahadeva of the Himalayas turns into a *matal bhola* (tipsy, jolly good fellow) and the goddess Uma is turned into the housewife of an extremely miserable household where she has to put up with an old, *ganja* addict, unemployed husband. The domestication, however, has not tarnished the divine glory; it has rather made the deities more endearingly gracious.

The book contains many striking suggestions worth exploring in depth. The suggestion, based on a linguistic analysis, that Sakti-cult may have come to India from China is one such. The possibility of identifying Durga with the goddess of crops because, for one thing, Durga is invoked in autumn that marks the beginning of vegetation is another. That Tara, a form of Durga, is possibly of Buddhist extraction is still another. It is interesting to learn that regular worship of the image of Kali probably started in 1768 and became widely fashionable during the reign of Maharaja Krishnachandra of Navadwip.

The book bears the unmistakable stamp of profound literary and historical scholarship.

Mohit K. Ray

1962 Award

Annada Sankar Ray

Japane

M.C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta; 1959; viii+256 pp.; Rs. 6.50

"Sri Annada Sankar Ray (b. 1904) is a distinguished Bengali novelist and writer. Brought up in the twin traditions of Orissa

> and Bengal, Sri Annada Sankar Ray began his literary career by writing with equal distinction in both Oriya and Bengali and made his mark as a poet of the Sabuj group of young Oriya writers. Later, he devoted himself to writing in Bengali only which, he has continued since. In 1927 he stood first at the Indian Civil Service examination in India. All through his distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service he continued to publish poems, short stories, essays and novels which brought him wide recognition and praise from such veterans as Rabindranath Tagore and Pramatha Chaudhuri. In 1951 he retired from the Civil Service prematurely in order to devote his whole time to writing and has made Santiniketan his home since then. In 1957 he visited Japan as a delegate to the International PEN Congress. The Award book, *Japane,* is the outcome of this journey. The book is remarkable for its inimitable style and richness of observation."

Annada Sankar Ray always visits a country to discover it in the true sense of the term. The success of his exploration does not depend on the time-scale for such an event, because he has in him a very receptive and penetrative mind. In the prime of his youth he wrote *Pathe Prabase* (1931), his first travelogue, in which we find his initiation in the keen sense of observation and also his affirmation in the fundamentals of aesthetics. His absorbing interest in men and society of the country of visit does not allow him to misfire, but helps him dart from side to side to portray it authentically. His profound penetration attains such a depth that it easily takes the option of becoming an artistic activity. As a result, every travel account is a fascinating study with a cover of rhythmic lyricism around it. Today, Annada Sankar is recognised as an indisputable master of travel literature.

In autumn 1957, Annada Sankar went to Japan to attend the International PEN Congress as one of the Indian delegates. What was initially a hesitant decision came to be a fortunate one later when, on arrival at Japan, he found a country of enormous treasures. His mental release was so joyous that he began to love it passionately. He liked what he saw. Japan, with its glorious past and present, was for him a great revelation about nature's gifts and man's performances. He took to the open road, the hill, the conference room, the theatre, the ballet hall, the temple, the

restaurant and so on, in search of the body and soul of Japan. What interested him especially were the traditional arts and the architecture, and the current performing arts. The people, their thoughts and their words were, of course, his main attraction.

From *Pathe Prabase* (1931) to *Japane* (1959) Annada Sankar has never tried to stride back as an observer. He hates to dip into the same river twice. So *Japane* is a step forward conceptually. He admits that his visit to Japan has initiated him to the cult of beauty–both outer and inner–for the first time. It is not only account of a country, not of a particular season. It has a three-dimensional base–the Indian author himself, Japan–the country of pilgrimage, and the autumn of 1957, all taken together. Annada Sankar's passage to Japan takes us in and around the great country of the East. *Japane* is a literary construction of lasting merit.

Jibendra Sinha Roy

1963 Award

Amiya Chakravarty

Ghare Pherar Din

Navana, Calcutta; 1961; 104 pp.; Rs. 3.50

"Dr. Amiya Chakravarty (b. 1901) is a distinguished Bengali poet and writer. Educated at Calcutta and Oxford Universities, Dr. Chakravarty combines in his personality a deep sense of tradition and a vivid awareness of the modern age. His long and close association with Rabindranath Tagore and his many sojourns in foreign lands have widened his intellectual background and deepened his humanist convictions. All this has gone into his making as a sensitive and mature poet of modern Bengal, at once simple and sophisticated, modest and daring.

The Award book *Ghare Pherar Din* is his latest collection of poems and has been hailed as an outstanding

contribution to Bengali literature for its maturity of thought and deep insight."

Ghare Pherar Din is a collection of seventy-two poems, dedicated to Rabindranath Tagore. The dedication piece itself is a short poem where Amiya Chakravarty recalls Tagore's concept of the universe along Upanisadic doctrines. Obviously, for him Tagore and his philosophy has had an abiding influence which he does not want to conceal as a creative writer. *Ghare Pherar Din* illustrates amply this phase of Tagore's vision while the poet nourishes what is bewilderingly modern in this very fast age, with a firm grip on us.

The book is divided into two parts : 'Antara' and 'Adhuna'. The first part contains three independent series of verses "Dvipavali", "Chaturdashpadi", and "Chalti". Throughout these poems one may find a traveller who has seen distant lands and places, noticed their natural and human beauty and heard soft voices and murmurs. The poet's unending sympathy with 'dark' Africa, its people and tradition and the way this vast continent is being exploited by foreigners have all been reflected in many of the poems. With a keen sense of understanding, Amiya Chakravarty has tried to go deep into this human problem.

Whether a poem describes the great composer Bach, or it narrates the tranquil moments in Manas Sarovar in the high altitudes of Tibet, or it treks the silent route as a white pigeon in the valleys of Kashmir, these invariably represent the wandering poet who shares a cosmic vision of this universe along with Gurudev Tagore, though in a different way. His journey through lands and seas make him an experienced traveller who could discern things with the right spirit of the cosmopolitan man, the essential human being, who might belong to any country or community. This transcendental vision makes these poems truly international in character where the poet could rise above creeds. But he does not fail to look at small beauties strewn around everywhere and *Ghare Pherar Din* contains a number of such poems that help recollect in us the beauteous moments of life.

Arun Bhattacharya

1964 Award

Subhas Mukhopadhyaya

Yata Durei Jai

Triveni Prakashan, Calcutta; 1962; 59 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Sri Subhas Mukhopadhyaya (b. 1919) is a distinguished Bengali poet. A graduate of the Calcutta University, Sri Mukhopadhyaya was deeply influenced by the political movements of the day in which he took an active part since his student days. Later on he joined the Communist Party of India in 1942 and became a staunch worker of the Anti-Fascist and Progressive Writers movements in Bengal. He has been an editor of the well known Bengali literary periodical, *Parichay*, and has published a number of books, both poetry and prose. A confirmed Marxist in outlook, Sri Mukhopadhyaya's poetry is permeated with a deep sympathy for the poor and the downtrodden.

The Award book, *Yata Durei Jai*, is his latest collection of poems which mark a new turn in the poet's sensibility and maturity. For its innate poetic quality and brilliant execution, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Bengali literature."

Yata Durei Jai is a product of maturity. The title-poem highlights the poet's time-consciousness and his abiding interest in poetry. Pre-occupation with time and nostalgic reminiscences are evident, in fact, in many poems. There are a number of city-poems depicting the squalor and ugliness of city life where the superstructure of civilization only hides the primal bestiality of man. In "Patharer Phul", we are told how flowers are often used as a camouflage to hide ugliness; much better are the unmasked sparks of fire. The idea of revolution suggested by fire recurs in a number of poems. In "Rastar Lok", a guilty pedestrian is haunted by his sense of past guilt. The narrative, the dramatic and monologues by different persons are all mixed up in generic constellations in "Kena Elana" in which a situation is created with dramatic intensity, individualized characters and keen psychological insight. Social realism with political undertone is the concern of "Mejaj", a domestic poem in which the poet is able to forge out right behavioural models for states

of feelings. In the long dramatic monologue "Mukhujyer Sanga Alap", the poet himself acts as the fulcrum of history in the prevailing political climate, but there is a tendency to suggest simplistic solutions to complex problems.

The poems contain many strikingly original images. In "Rastar Lok", the road is compared to a brutally beaten rustic old man grovelling in the dust. "Dinante" uses the stylistic device of foregrounding. Subhas's greatest craftsmanship, however, consists in his imaginative use of form where lineations, indentations and spacings are used as visual orchestrations of the movement of thought.

Despite occasional distant echoes of modern European poets, Subhas is original in his use of colloquial diction, speech rhythm, brilliant imageries, various stylistic devices, cinematic montage and eloquent silence.

Mohit K. Ray

1965 Award

Bishnu Dey

Smriti Satta Bhabishyat

Sambodhi Publications, Calcutta; 1963; 8+152 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Sri Bishnu Dey (b. 1909) is a distinguished Bengali poet, critic and educationist. Born in Calcutta, Sri Bishnu Dey received his education at St. Paul's College and Calcutta University. Later he became a lecturer in English literature and is now Professor and Head of the English Department, Central College, Calcutta.

Sri Bishnu Dey's first collection of poems, published at the age of 24 marked him out as a poet with a mind of his own and won the appreciation of Rabindranath Tagore. One of the pioneers of modern Bengali poetry, Sri Bishnu Dey has been closely associated with the progressive literary movements of Bengal, with the *Kollol* and *Parichaya* groups, and was one of the founders of the well known literary journal, *Sahityapatra*. Besides a number of original works, both poetry and prose, he has published several volumes of translation of western

poetry, of which a verse translation of Eliot's poetry has been much admired. An essayist of charm and distinction, he has written several illuminating studies of modern Indian art and literature. Beginning with lyrical verses, delightfully fresh, Sri Bishnu Dey has gradually moved towards a more individual and sophisticated expression recording the anguished sensibility of a contemporary mind, acutely aware of social injustice.

The Award book, *Smriti Satta Bhabishyat*, is a collection of his poems written between the years 1957 and 1961. These poems mark a further development in the poet's personality towards integration of the lonely individual with his environment. For its deep insight in the working of the human mind and its fine craftsmanship, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Bengali literature."

Smriti Satta Bhabishyt was the last poetical work of Bishnu Dey's peak period. In this book of poems Bishnu Dey conveys the ordeals and pains of a suffering soul, and portrays the dreams and pleasures of a visionary mind. True, a sense of sadness and fatigue sometimes overtakes him; sometimes the pangs of memories haunt him also. But all these poetic moorings take place in natural environs which he dives into during his sojourn in Rikhiya, Bihar. This contact with nature and his intimacy with different schools of painting give a new dimension to his creative self and transfuse a charming grace to his poetry. And, in this way he ultimately keeps his faith in man's majesty and grandeur.

Bishnu Dey is generally thought to be a difficult poet. But this volume of poetry does not fail to persuade the reader its benign side. It is written in easier diction and has cosier images. The poems do not seem to have any hard crust. The language ranges from homely colloquial to formally rhetorical with, of course, no technical complexity. On the metrical side, the poet has taken to formal and non-formal (free) verses. In this volume, we find some fine specimens of his fidelity to form. His freer explorations speak of his mastery over that type of artifice. Technically speaking *Smriti Satta Bhabishyat* expresses a variety of voices and tones over a variety of subjects. A serious reader does not miss its dramatic elements too.

Jibendra Sinha Roy

1966 Award

Manoje Basu

Nishi-Kutumba

Grantha Prakash, Calcutta; 1963; Vol.I, 264 pp.; Vol.II, 292 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Sri Manoje Basu (b. 1901) is a veteran Bengali novelist and short story writer. Born at Dongaghata in the district of Jessore, now in East Pakistan, Sri Manoje Basu lost his father when he was eight years old and had to face a hard struggle for existence from an early age. While still a student he came in close contact with the revolutionary movement in Bengal and later actively participated in the Non-Cooperation and Swadeshi movements. His remarkable novel *Bhuli Nai* (1943) is the fruit of this early association with the revolutionary struggle for freedom. Graduating from the Calcutta University, he became a school teacher and continued in that profession for twenty years.

Though known primarily as a novelist of the social realist school, Sri Manoje Basu made his debut in the literary world as a poet. His first short story, published in *Prabasi*, won for him an immediate recognition. Since then his prolific pen has produced a number of novels and short stories, remarkable for their realism and vigour, their first-hand observation of Bengal's rural life and their chronicles of contemporary middle class society. Sri Manoje Basu is widely travelled in India and abroad. He was awarded the Sarat Chandra Memorial Prize and Medal of Calcutta University and Narsingdas Prize of Delhi University.

The Award book, *Nishi-Kutumba*, depicts the life of the social outcast with psychological insight and pungent realism. For its vigorous attack on hypocrisy and sham and for its realistic portraiture of a wide range of characters the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Bengali literature."

Nishi-Kutumba is an unusual work. The author has resolutely avoided the current vogue of depiction of the urban 'psychological

man' but has selected for his locale the rural-agricultural region situated between the well settled villages of Southern Bengal and the uninhabitable Sunderbans of coastal Bengal. The central character, Saheb, is a very fair looking foundling (on account of which he was called Saheb, meaning a European) who was brought up by a prostitute in a Calcutta brothel during his childhood, escapes to this backwater region, becomes an expert in techniques and practice of burglary and is so devoted to the artistic aspect of his vocation that he has no thought left for women. He burgles the well-to-do, but takes little for himself; but few except the initiates in the art suspect the source of his charities.

Saheb never lays a violent hand on anyone in going about his business and in his public activities, is so ready to lend a helping hand to anyone in distress that he is liked by all the people. When old age comes, he, however, is a lonely soul, his few associates having pre-deceased him. His fingers have lost their nimbleness, his eyes their keenness. A time comes when he has to go hungry for days, but he is too proud to beg. He thinks finally of surrendering to the police (which would ensure him two meals a day), but the police will not take him into custody as there is no record against him. So he tries to make up a case of theft against himself and finally takes upon himself the blame of having stolen a necklace. The police are as usual, unkind to the captive; beaten, mauled, and starved, he is brought to the house of the village elder, whose sister, a child-widow, he had saved years ago from the machinations of a rascally lover. In the assembled crowd of spiteful men, she comes forward to give him a square meal before he is dragged to police lock-up.

Thus ends the story of the colourful life of a master thief, a man who, apart from his nightly exploits (*Nishi-Kutumba* is an euphemism for a burglar), is as human as the best of men. And Basu has drawn his pictures of Saheb and the society he worked in with a masterly brush that boldly paints the simple folk, their goodness, follies and foibles because he knows the folk of the region as well as the back of his hand. And perhaps his greatest art consists in the spell-binding nature of his story-telling.

Has the story a message? All works of art carry one, explicit or implicit; so has *Nishi-Kutumba*. The theme that runs through the story and is climaxed by the final act of the compassionate widow is, in the words of William Cowper:

There is mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought !
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

S.L. Ghosh

1967 Award

Buddhadeva Bose

Tapasvi O Tarangini

"Sri Buddhadeva Bose (b. 1908) is a distinguished poet, critic and essayist. Born in the Comilla district (now in Pakistan) of East Bengal. Sri Buddhadeva Bose graduated from the Dacca University. While still young, he edited and published *Pragati*, a literary magazine and soon came into prominence as one of the *Kallol* group of writers. Later he taught English literature in a Calcutta college and was for a time Head of the Department of Comparative Literature at the Jadavpur University. He has been a visiting professor of English literature in the USA. Well read and sophisticated, he wields a pen, remarkable for its charm, in Bengali and English, with equal facility.

Though known principally as a poet, there is hardly a form of Bengali literature which Sri Buddhadeva Bose has not touched and enriched, be it poetry, novel, short story, drama, essay, or writing for children. One of his major contributions was as Editor of the well known poetry journal *Kavita* which, unfortunately, is no longer there. His independent outlook and essentially anti-traditionalist bent of mind has often made him the centre of a controversy, which he seems to like and which has helped him to remain young in spirit.

The Award book, *Tapasvi O Tarangini*, interprets against the present context, a well known ancient legend of love and lust. For its innate poetic quality, its daring experiment with style and form, and its deeply psychological treatment of the content, the play has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Bengali literature."

In *Tapasvi O Tarangini* the dramatist is much more in unison with classical dramatists of Greece than with the classical dramatists of India, both in style and in idea. Yet Buddhadeva was no copy-book imitator of Greek plays; he threw to the winds the principles of the three unities, particularly the unity of time and unity of place. In between the first act and the second act there is a gap of one day and also a shifting of the place of occurrence; between the second and third act the gap widens, it is a gap of a year. But the incidents of the third act and fourth act occur in a day.

The outline of the story of the play may be summarised thus. Once in the Kingdom of Anga there was no rain; drought caused famine, pestilence and the like. The distress of the people knew no bounds. According to the soothsayer, to tide over this calamity and to bring rain and vegetation, it was necessary to lure the ascetic Risyasringa and a courtesan named Tarangini of the city of Campa. At the outset the sexual desire of the ascetic was to be rekindled, then he should be given in marriage to Santa, the daughter of King Lomapada. However, Santa, the beautiful princess was in love with Angsuman, the son of the minister. But for the sake of the country she has to leave Angsuman, her choice. Tarangini succeedes in enticing the ascetic. But the seducer herself is seduced. She falls in love with the ascetic, a prostitute turned into a lover. But the ascetic reacts differently; he feels only the charm of the body. Here begins a tense but sweet struggle between Amour and Eros, Love and Lust, Soul and Flesh. Risyasringa renounces all his newly earned fortunes, including Santa, and her new born son. Santa is asked to accept Angsuman. Tarangini too has a man who had been wooing her for a long time. But Tarangini is now a changed woman. She understands what is Love and what is Lust, and when and where the two merge.

As a dramatist, Buddhadeva was objective *par excellence*; and the dialogue of the play springs up straight from the dusty prose of our daily life, but it touches now and then that superb magical height which is poetry.

Tapasvi O Tarangini is a poetic drama, but Buddhadeva knows that allowing "bursts of poetry" cannot be a reasonable substitute for action.

The theme of the play is taken from the *Ramayana*, but the dramatist has remodelled it after his own idea. "I have rearranged

a story of the purana according to my liking and have infused into it the psychology of a modern man *vis-a-vis* his pain and struggle." *(Ekti puraner Kahinike ami nijer monomata kare sajiye niyechi, tate sancar karechi adhunik manuser manasata o dvanda bedana)*

Risyasringa carries in his soul the pangs of nobody other than that of a modern man. He has tasted the sweets of Eros but does not stop. Tarangini, gives her body, and wins her soul.

Suresh Chandra Moitra

1969 Award

Monindra Ray

Mohini Araal

Navapatra Prakashan, Calcutta; 1966; 30 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Sri Monindra Ray (b. 1919) is a distinguished poet and journalist. Born at Pabna, now in East Pakistan, Sri Ray received his higher education at the Calcutta University. Later he took to journalism and is now working as Assistant Editor-in-charge, *Amrita Weekly*, Calcutta.

Sri Monindra Ray has been admired as a modern poet who has kept pace with the fastchanging tempo of contemporary life. His verse is notable for its experimented variations and thematic originality. His poems which run into eight volumes are distinguished by a search for identity in the disturbed and uptorn world of today, and have been highly acclaimed by discerning literary critics.

The Award book, *Mohini Araal* (which means, The Bewitching Veil), is one of his latest poetic compositions remarkable for its vividness and virility of expression. It bears witness to the author's quest for the essence of existence beyond the superficial appearances. For its maturity of imagination, high seriousness of purpose and its remarkable restraint in expression, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Bengali literature."

Mohini Araal contains ten poems of moderate length running into five hundred and fifty-five lines, and reflects the inner life of the modern man in the last phase of this century. The book is a kind of narrative with interspersed monologue; and these ten poems are, in fact, one long poem with psychological pauses in between. The poet has immaculate control over the exact rhythm that continues up to the last, and the soothing rise and fall of the movements make the reader throb with the inner-depth of the hero's life, which is otherwise barren and non-dramatic. The hero, of course, has experienced the essential tension, the withering away of blossoming lives, the hue and cry of dismantled processions. We feel at times that the agonised person surrenders himself to fate, but later regains a consciousness that arises out of the inner-truth of life. Love symbolised. He has a desire to unfold himself in many directions and the poet pleads endearingly to the agonised hero to listen to the eternal murmur, "O, the enchanting barrier, uncover the golden plate, keep steadfast your eyes on hers." This is the look of love, eternal and transparent. Only through such a sojourn one can find the true love that might enter a heart.

The language all through is extremely fluid and takes the reader smoothly to its desired end. Contemporary poetry has seen much communication gap in recent times; but *Mohini Araal* has been one of the major deviations–it has the right tone and timbre. The poet, his agonised hero and the reader are all at a level of communication and the enchanting barrier is removed once for all.

Arun Bhattacharya

1970 Award

Abu Sayeed Ayyub

Adhunikata O Rabindranath

Bharvi, Calcutta; 1968; 253 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Sri Abu Sayeed Ayyub (b. 1906) is a distinguished scholar, essayist, philosopher. Born in Calcutta, Sri Ayyub graduated with Honours in Physics and in 1933 qualified for Master of

> Arts in Philosophy from Calcutta University, obtaining a first class. He lectured on Philosophy in the Post-Graduate Department of Calcutta University during 1938-40 and at Visva-Bharati University during 1950-51, and headed the Department of Indian Studies at Melbourne University in 1961. Editor of the quarterly Journal *Quest* from 1958 to 1968, he also edited the first anthology of modern Bengali poetry in 1939. Among important events of his career is his presiding over the Ethics Section of the Indian Philosophy Congress at Cuttack in 1959. Currently Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, he is writing a book on the religious thoughts of Tagore, Gandhi and Azad. Another book in English, *Poetry and Truth*, has been recently published by the Jadavpur University. The range of Sri Ayyub's interests is as wide as his scholarship is profound.
>
> The Award book, *Adhunikata O Rabindranath*, is a work of rare distinction, remarkable alike for its literary insight and its depth and range of thought. For its inherent humanism, its masterly analysis and lucid exposition, and its deep insight into the complex problems of modernism in current literary expression, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Bengali literature."

The fount and origin of *Adhunikata O Rabindranath* should be traced to the sedulous and respectful attention of a man whose mother tongue was not Bengali. His juvenile wonder, after reading the Urdu rendering of *Gitanjali*, made him restless to learn Bengali and read Rabindranath in the original. His verve was not in vain, and he became an eminent critic in Bengali literature. The theme of the book, under discussion, is Rabindranath's poetry in relation to modernism in world literature. In the opening essay "Amangalbodh O Adhunik Kavita" (Consciousness of Evil and Modern Poetry), the critic reviews the reeking state of modern world literature that offers us nothing but grimy and grisly pictures of modern life, in the name of realism and surrealism. It is Rabindranath, he avers, who rightly refused to become the victim of modern literary maladies. In the next chapter "Amangalbodh O Rabindranath" (Consciousness of Evil and Rabindranath), Ayyub discusses, in nine sections, the evolution of Rabindranath's poetic contribution, and finds that from his callowness to maturity the poet played his lute in the tune of sweetness, light and love. However, this does not mean that the

poet altogether winked at the wasteland of life. He, in this connection, engages our attention to some poems of the pre-*Gitanjali* period where the poet sounded his sense of evil. He also observes that towards the fag end of his life the poet was becoming more and more interrogative and realistic; but the poet's inveighing against the ills of this world did never make him a misanthrope, like some western modern poets. In the chapter, "Sreyoniti O Sahityaniti" (Principle of Welfare and Principle of Literature), he advocates that literature should not be alienated from the principle of welfare. What we expect from the poet is the "rectification of human emotions." He is also critical about Baudelaire's feeling of *monotone et petit* in literature. If a poet finds that the role of evil is ever active in life, he is not a realist but a dreamer of evil. In the chapter on the language of poetry 'Kavitar Bhasha', the critic rightly rejects the view of Mallarme and his modern followers–word for word's sake–and emphasises the emotive and the connotative value of words in poetry. He also rebuts Shankha Ghose's opinion that Rabindranath's poems, in the last phase, are quite unpoetic. The concluding essay of the book throws new light on the two poems : "Prasna" (Asking) from *Navajatak* (New-born) and a poem (No. 13) from *Sesh Lekha* (The Last Writing). The essays, originally published in different periodicals at different times and collected in this book, after marginal changes necessary for their cohesion, may be taken as the illuminating marginalia to studies in Tagore's poetry.

Apurba Kumar Ray

1971 Award

Umaprasad Mukhopadhyaya

Manimahesh

Mitra and Ghosh; Calcutta; 1969; 180 pp.; Rs. 6.50

"Sri Umaprasad Mukhopadhyaya (b. 1902) is a distinguished author in Bengali. Born in the illustrious family of Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhyaya, and educated at the Calcutta University, Sri Mukhopadhyaya practised at the Bar for a number of years.

In 1958 he left the legal practice and turned a traveller in search of peace in the Himalayas. Thus began the series of travelogues embodying his unique experiences of Nature and his concern for the fundamental values of life. He now leads a retired life.

The Award book, *Manimahesh*, is a travelogue first published in 1970 and is a fine testimony to the creative talent of the author. For its simple style and sensitive expression it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Bengali literature."

Manimahesh, a travelogue in three parts deals with the author's trek over the Himalayas. The first part describes the journey from Pathankot to the foot of Manimahesh by the side of a picturesque lake. The second part describes the journey from Khara-Pathar towards Chakrata, a high cantonment area over the Jamuna Valley. The third part of the journey poetically inspired consists of reminiscences. Kinnor Desh or the land of the Kinnors, made famous by its reference in the *Mahabharata* and in the writings of Kalidasa, and being painted by the artists of Ajanta murals, fired the author's imagination long ago. The author now starts from Masobra, a locality on the outskirts of Simla and reaches Rampur by bus. From Rampur he starts by foot gathering information about the cultural habits of the people as he proceeds till he meets a beautiful Bushayari-capped Kinnor boy, Fenduram, who becomes the author's assistant-cum-guide throughout the rest of the journey. After passing through some legendary mountain-villages the author reaches the foot of the 22,000 feet-high Kinnor Kailas, the peak of which forms the shape of the phallic image of Lord Siva.

Nowhere does the author fabricate stories to allure the reader as he is a genuine lover of the Himalayas. He is well-informed as he goes to the hills and gathers information on his way. His description of the journey includes all the mythological and socio-anthropological details and still the charm of the trek is as fresh as ever with some sensitive delineation of character-sketches like Fenduram or Masterji. Though the language jingles rather awkwardly like a rhythmic poem here and there, the style, on the whole, evokes a very sincere feeling of a man, completely devoted to the hills and highlanders, easily satisfied with little comfort, always eager to be away from the crowd, interested in social and physical anthropology and always

appreciative of the silent sun-kissed Himalayan peaks, absorbed as if in deep meditation. All these interesting qualities not only make this travelogue an adventurous account of the ascent of the Himalayas, but also promise some sort of emergence into a new plateau of life itself.

Ujjal Kumar Majumdar

1972 Award

Santosh Kumar Ghosh

Shesh Namaskar

Dey's Publishing, Calcutta; 1971; 559 pp.; Rs. 20.00

"Sri Santosh Kumar Ghosh (b. 1920) was born at Rajbari (now in Bangladesh). Sri Ghosh received his higher education at the Calcutta University and then took to journalism as a career. After a number of assignments in several newspapers, he is now the Associate Editor of *Anand Bazar Patrika* and the *Hindustan Standard*. A widely travelled man, Sri Ghosh has visited a number of countries and participated in many international gatherings of journalists.

In the field of creative writing also, Sri Ghosh's contribution has been substantial. A prolific writer, he has published several novels, plays, travelogues, collections of short stories and essays and has made a deep impression on the reading public by the freshness of his outlook and his experimentation in literary forms.

The Award book, *Shesh Namaskar*, is his latest novel written in the form of a letter to a mother. Characterised by a ruthless and sincere search for the meaning of life, it has a note of sadness that ennobles and elevates the mind. For its deep sensibility and realistic portrayal, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Bengali literature."

The novels of Santosh Kumar Ghosh reflect a continuous study of life, both prospective and retrospective. This persistent search for identity sometimes makes him hold on to past memories, because he knows, like Yeats, that memories are old identities. Whose identities are they? His novels do not offer precise evidence concerning the relationship between the writer and his heroes. Still it may be reasonably argued that there are, at least to some extent, the author's self-projection in his narrations. These autobiographical elements make his novels belong to a different genre. Of them, *Shesh Namaskar* is the most outstanding. It is his *magnum opus*.

Shesh Namaskar is the story of a young man who has gone astray. At the beginning he is basically innocent and virtuous, but with the advent of youth he plunges into sinful acts. In this way, he swings to the vile complexities of life. His sense of sanctity and the good evaporates. When the sinless adolescent boy lapses into an unscrupulous sinful man, he looks back to the source of life–his mother –with an inner urge for self-introspection and self-purification. On being locked into a frontier society of debased values, he finds in his mother a rational contrivance for confession and a moral instrument for change. He, therefore, writes a series of letters to his mother in which he takes the strategy of detection and discovery of his own self. To serve this purpose, he makes a frontal attack on his past experiences and memories, and brings out the old identities in the open.

The fiction in question can legitimately demand wide acclamation for its technical novelty. The author has deftly woven the fabric of the novel with the threads of a bunch of letters. It is a form that is seldom adopted in Bengali novels but this device adequately suits him here, because he does not want to be dependent on an abundance of events. Rather he selects a few events, observe them poignantly and analyses them with meticulous care. Santosh Kumar seems to be very adept in the presentation of details. As a result the novel does not have a well-built plot or a sustained story-telling quality. Its main attraction lies in what the writer wants to say and how he makes his say memorable by means of intellectual and analysis.

Jibendra Sinha Roy

1974 Award

Nirendranath Chakravarti

Ulanga Raja

Ananda Publishers, Calcutta; 1971; 64 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"Sri Nirendranath Chakravarti, distinguished Bengali poet, was born in 1924 in Faridpur (now in Bangladesh) and graduated from Calcutta. He joined *Ananda Bazar Patrika* in 1951 and is now its Assistant Editor. He has travelled widely in the UK, Europe, USA and Japan. His published works include nine books of poems, one novel, and a discussion of Bengali metre. He won the Ultorath Poetry Award in 1958 and Tarashankar Award in 1973.

Ulanga Raja is considered an outstanding contribution to modern Bengali poetry, noted for its imagery and sensitivity."

Ulanga Raja marks a turning point in the poetical career of Nirendranath. For the first time is heard a distinct note of social awareness. The title-poem provides the mythical framework within which all the poems are thematically adjusted. The central theme is the malaise of the modern world where people refuse to face truth for selfish reasons. One must learn to draw sustenance from within, rise above meanness and with unflinching determination move on.

Of a different taste are a few poems concerned with the poet's personal predicament. We learn about the poet's growing concern for his old age. The poet is also uncertain about his achievement, but he would accept the inevitable and gracefully bow out. A poet must experience the ceaseless struggle to capture the beauty of the female form in words, as the only way to possess it vicariously is by creating a verbal artefact. The most beautiful poem in the collection is "Kalghare Ciler Kanna" (Wailing of a Kite in the Bathroom), in which the death of a kite assumes dimensions of a universal tragedy. The kite is seen as a mysterious mirror-image of the self; its sufferings are the poet's sufferings. Comparable with the greatest bird-poems of any literature the poem has also some interesting affinity with Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish".

Although afflicted by the malaise of modern world, Nirendranath is not blind to the sweet suavity of domestic sentiment and can depict, in a few strokes, an idyllic picture of country life.

Recurring lexical items act as a unifying principle for the poems which are even otherwise thematically connected. A fine craftsman, Nirendranath has evolved an original idiom and his diction has the force and vitality of living speech.

Ulanga Raja is a significant contribution to modern Bengali poetry.

Mohit K. Ray

1975 Award

Bimal Kar

Asamaya

Anand Publisher (P) Ltd., Calcutta; 1972; 217 pp.; Rs. 12.00

"Sri Bimal Kar, distinguished Bengali novelist and writer of short stories, was born in 1921. He aimed at being a medical practitioner but circumstances compelled him to graduate in Arts from Calcutta University. After many an odd job, he turned to journalism and is now an Assistant Editor of *Desh*, the most widely read weekly in Bengali. Sri Kar has published a number of books during the last thirty years, notable among which are *Asamay, Amra Tin Premik O Bhuban, Deoal, Grahan, Jadubangsa* and *Kharkuto*.

Asamaya is considered an outstanding contribution to Bengali literature for its analysis of human relationships and dexterous experimentation in craft."

Asamaya is a moving tale of a well-to-do middle class family of a railway doctor, Mahesh Chandra Mitra during the British period. In this novel, Bimal Kar is very careful in handling the details of the psychological conflicts of the characters as each of them is given opportunity to reveal his or her inner world.

With a rare skill the author works out the mental processes of the characters on a very thin story line. The story progresses very little outwardly; only the inner workings of the six main characters (Uncle, Mohini, Ayena, Suhas, Sachipati and Abin) give the required push, of course, inwardly; and the whose texture of the story is very delicately woven out. The style is simple, sincere, and deeply

poetical to suit the inward turnings of the characters whose first person reportings add depth and intimacy to the plot. Though the author focuses his attention mainly on Mohini and relates others to her problems, it may be argued that the author gives a good amount of attention to other characters also who have problems not at all related to Mohini's. And those problems branch out into so many parallel psychological probings to give the whole story a somewhat diffusing effect. Still the story, when considered totally, gives an effect of a helpless family wearing out, and Mohini, perhaps symbolising this state of decaying, is to face Abin, the 'breaker of the mould' type. The masterly handling of this slow and delicate unfolding of an elderly, inhibited woman before a straight-forward youth makes it a rare piece of artistry in the fictional history of modern Bengali literature.

Ujjal Kumar Majumdar

1976 Award

Maitraye Devi

Na Hanyate

Manisha, Calcutta; 1974; 335 pp.; Rs. 20.00

"Srimati Maitraye Devi, distinguished Bengali novelist, poet and Tagore scholar, was born in 1914. She had the rare privilege of having been taught by Tagore in literature, who also wrote the preface to her first book of poems *Udita* published when she was sixteen. Smt. Maitreyi Devi has four collections of poems and six books on Tagore to her credit. A keen student of Indian Scriptures and Classics, she has also written *Gods and Men of Rigveda*–a book on Rigveda. She is a worker of peace and the founder of the Council for Promotion of Communal Harmony. Widely travelled, she has lectured extensively in Europe and the Soviet Union. She now runs a school for destitute children near Calcutta.

Na Hanyate is considered an outstanding contribution to Bengali literature for its depth of feeling, intellectual conviction, sincere philosophical undertones and rich human qualities."

Na Hanyate was born of an intense agony, originally intended as a release of the pent up suffering of a soul through pen on paper. But because of her consummate skill in telling a story, what was personal became universal and surprisingly for her readers of all category added to its sublimity by sharing in the sacredness of the experience. She was afraid that her precious secrets would be profaned as they have been profaned too often since even before the days of Shakespeare. And, therefore, she was eager to call it a 'fication'. But who has been taken in by her fiction of a 'fication'?

Gone are the days of Sarat Chandra, Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath when Bengali writings were avidly translated, freely 'transcreated', and feebly imitated in all the major languages of India. *Na Hanyate* for once, in recent past, has reversed that trend by suddenly bursting forth into the all India scene and is likely to enthrall many more readers in years to come, at home and abroad as well, thanks to its able rendering into English by the authoress herself.

Space does not permit literary evaluation. Yet one point should not go unmentioned. The eulogy which has been heaped on this book is equally for its artistic excellence and disarming truthfulness or moral courage. Whether a work of art should be judged on its moral impact or intellectual content is an old unsolved question. But we cannot deny that *Na Hanyate* has gained from a correct blending of intellection and emotion and at the same time has attained a delicious moral overtone which does not come from conscious preaching.

Gauri Ayyub

1977 Award

Sankha Ghosh

Babarer Prarthana

Dey's Publishing, Calcutta; 1976; 64 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"Sri Sankha Ghosh, distinguished Bengali poet and critic, was born in 1932 at Chandpur, now in Bangladesh. He has a Master's degree in Bengali from Calcutta University and is at present

a Visiting Fellow at Viswa Bharati. Sri Ghosh, who has been writing poems and critical essays for the last twenty-five years, has 6 collections of poems and 4 volumes of literary criticism to his credit, besides books written for children. A recipient of the Nakshatra and Ultorath literary awards, he spent the academic year 1967-68 at Iowa as a guest in the International Writing Program of the Iowa University, USA.

Babarer Prarthana is considered an outstanding contribution to Bengali literature for its subdued yet deep involvement in social struggle, rich imagery, and use of everyday speech combined with a mastery of form and technique."

Babarer Prarthana contains forty-seven poems in three sections, viz. 'Manikarnika' (fifteen poems), 'Khar' (fourteen poems) and 'Hatem Tai' (eighteen poems). The poem "Babar's Prayer" refers to the legend narrated by many Muslim historians (particularly by Abul Fazl) that when Babar's son Humayun fell ill, he prayed to the Almighty to spare his son's life in exchange for his own and the prayer was granted.

Sankha Ghosh belongs to that generation of Bengali poets who were born in the early thirties, the fourth generation from the heyday of Rabindranth Tagore's glorious times. Sankha Ghosh is a contemporary of several other admirable poets, Alokeranjan Das Gupta, Shakti Chattopadhyay and Sunil Gangopadhyay. Shanka Ghosh caught the attention of the reading public right from the start by dint of his diction (which is simple on the surface but deep and manifold in its suggestiveness); his rhythm and rhyme are many-toned, subtle and sometimes startling. Outstanding examples of verbal melody can be found in poems such as "Srinkhala" (Discipline), "Marching Song", "Chap Srishti Korun" (Build up a Pressure), "Bhikhiri Chheler Abhiman" (The Beggar Boy's Anguish), "Ei Rakami" (Just Like This), and "Morag Jhunti" (The Cock's Tuft). The first three stanzas of the poem "Babarer Prarthana", a lyrical monologue, a prayer to Allah, go thus:

Here I kneel down facing the West,
Springtime today is empty-handed,
Destroy me if such be Thy will
But let my offspring live in dreams;
Where has vanished his clean youthfulness,

Where does a transparent secret eat into his vitals,
Defeat accumulates in the corner of his eyes,
Poisoned become his lungs and pulse and arteries?

Raise the *Ajan* melody to the yonder heavens,
In suburbs and meadows and the vacant sky,
Make me a stone turned immobile,
But let my offspring live in dreams !

Though this poem remains the title-piece, it does not contain an all-pervasive single theme but each one of the 47 poems is a lyric and all the lyrics together present a multicoloured, many-patterned garden of flower-like poems. Sankha Ghosh is without question a highly talented lyrical poet in Bengali today.

Amalendu Bose

1978 Award

Sankari Prasad Basu

Vivekananda O Samkalin Bharatvarsha
Vol. I, II and III

Mondal Book House, Calcutta; Vol. I, 1977, 412 pp., Rs. 20.00; Vol. II, 1976, 395 pp., Rs. 20.00; Vol. III, 1978, 537 pp., Rs. 30.00

"Sri Sankari Prasad Basu, distinguished biographer and critic in Bengali, was born at Howrah in 1928. He stood first in first division at his M.A. examination in Bengali from the University of Calcutta in 1950. After teaching at various local colleges, he is now Reader in Bengali at the University of Calcutta. He has published twenty-five books so far, which include his writings on medieval Bengali Vaishnava poetry, Subhash Chandra Bose, Sister Nivedita, and cricket. Vivekananda, his times and his contemporaries are a life-long passion with him and his two-volume compilation of letters written by and to Sister Nivedita is to be published shortly.

Vivekananda O Samkalin Bharatvarsha is considered an outstanding contribution to Bengali literature for its flawless

scholarship, authenticity of detail, a vivid conjuring-up of a bygone era and its exquisite prose."

The multifarious contributions of Sankari Prasad Basu that range from his popular writings on cricket to critical studies in Vaishnava lyrics and socio-political analysis of Vivekananda's life and time have made him a man of high renown. And with praiseworthy perfection, the writer provides a heightened insight into the truth about the life of Vivekananda.

Basu begins his book with the scene of Ramakrishna's attainment of nirvana. After making a succinct survey of Vivekananda's stay at Baranagore monastery, the author engages our attention to his preparation for attending the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, where he baptized the West not with water but with fire. The success of his mission, the preaching of Advaitaism in the Occident, invited contrary remarks of Indian Christian missionaries as well as Brahmos, especially the *Nababidhan* group. The author delves for information into old periodicals, daily newspapers and authentic books on Vivekananda, to establish his viewpoint. In the opening volume, he observes that Vivekananda is the first man of the Renaissance who realized the necessity of an all-embracing national uplift. So, religion was not his prime and only concern, and he expressed his invaluable views on politics and social principles, education, art and literature.

The second volume demonstrates how Vivekananda could move the contemporary talents of the West, like Max Mueller, Leo Tolstoy, Nikola Tesla and others. In this connection, Max Mueller's so long unpublished letters to Vivekananda and E.T. Sturdy deserve attention. The author's readings on the international Ramakrishna movement sponsored by Max Mueller, Romain Rolland, Christopher Isherwood and Aldous Huxley offer a new dimension to the understanding of Vivekananda, in the light of his great preceptor, Ramakrishna, and his gospel of humanism. A particular chapter of this volume reveals Henry Barrows' subtle anti-Vivekananda stance, during his stay in India. The concluding chapter of this volume describes the standing ovation received by Vivekananda at Colombo and Madras.

The third volume of the book begins with Vivekananda's warm reception in Calcutta and some other places in India. In other chapters of this volume, the author makes us aware of the theosophist reaction against Vivekananda, the role of Annie Besant, the resistance of

conservative Hindu society, and Vivekananda's mangnificent role as a revivalist and a reformist. The author, in this volume, also refers to Vivekananda's lucid locution in English and Hindi.

The author's intelligent integration of massive and incontrovertible biographical information with religious and socio-political interpretation, and his daring exploration of some unknown but vital facts about Vivekananda have sustained the reader's scholarly as well as popular interest.

Apurba Kumar Ray

DOGRI

1970 Award

Narendra Khajuria

Neela Ambar Kaale Badal

J.R. Harikishan Lal Chopra, Jammu; 1967; viii+160 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Sri Narendra Khajuria (1933-70) was a distinguished short story writer, playwright and author. Born in the district of Jammu, he having lost his mother at the age of six and his father at eight, was brought up under the kind care of his elder brother Sri Ram Nath Shastri. After completing his education Sri Khajuria joined the State Education Department as a primary school teacher and was posted at a remote village where he came in close contact with the simple hill people providing him with a never-failing inspiration for his writings. In 1964 Sri Khajuria joined the J & K State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages as editor of its Hindi journal *Sheeraza*, where he continued to work till his sudden premature demise in 1970.

Gifted with a prolific pen, Sri Khajuria in his brief career wrote a number of books and made his mark in various fields of creative writing with the freshness of his outlook and sincerity of purpose. His first collection of short stories *Kole Dian Leekran* published in 1958 was immediately hailed as a turning point in Dogri fiction. His radio plays and writing for children were instant successes and he received several State awards for his literary works.

The Award book, *Neela Ambar Kaale Badal*, is the second collection of his short stories published in 1967. For its charming prose style and realistic characterisation the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Dogri literature."

Neela Ambar Kaale Badal contains some of the best short stories of Narendra Khajuria. There is, of course, sentimentalism as in "Natak da Hero", "Ma Tu Lori Ga" and "Painchhi Partoay Par" dealing as they do with patriotism, sacrifice for the country and for one's beloved. In

"Kastu da Kale Tittar", the main character relives her lost days. In such stories as "Makde Lore Sailiyan Butian", "Sach Jheda Trame de pate par nain Lakhoa", "Nila Ambar Kaale Badal", "Apna, Apna Dharam" and "Saddro Dai", Narendra exhibits greater social awareness, psychological interest and mature craftsmanship. Social changes which are slowly taking place, clash of the old and the new values and harsh realities are depicted in an effective manner.

But "Kastu da Kale Tittar," "Inami Kahani", "Kavita da Aint" "Pattar Patjhad Da", and "Ik Samhal" are the best stories of this collection. We see in them all the qualities which distinguish Narendra from most of the short story writers of the sixties, who wrote with social purpose, psychological probing, craftsmanship and good characterisation. Kastu and Premu of "Inami Kahani" and Nani of "Ik Samhal" are memorable characters, filled with the vitality of life, tenderness and pathos.

Narendra's strongest point is his use of Dogri prose as a powerful vehicle for expressing his feelings. His wit and satire, his tongue-in-cheek style and symbolical use of situations, place Narendra, head and shoulders above his contemporary short story writers in Dogri.

"Kavita da Aint" and "Ik Pattar Patjhad Da," apart from fine characterisation and powerful prose, have an element of symbolism in them. In the end of "Kavita da Aint", we see the fate of art in a world of commercialism; the young man in 'Ik Pattar Patjhad Da" symbolises the role played by some of the present intellectuals, writers, professionals–quite often deliberately for petty gains, and against their better sense and judgement.

Narendra Khajuria's *Neela Ambar Kaale Badal* is an outstanding contribution to Dogri short story literature.

Nilamber Dev Sharma

1971 Award

Padma Sachdev

Meri Kavita Mere Geet

Tawi Prakashan, New Delhi; 1969; 96 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"Smt. Padma Sachdev (b. 1940) is a distinguished poetess in Dogri. Born in a family of Sanskrit scholars at Jammu, Smt.

> Padma Sachdev was educated at the local Gandhi Memorial College. She wrote her first poem in 1955 while still in her teens. Besides Dogri, she has also written in Hindi and Urdu, and has published a number of her writings in leading Hindi periodicals. She is also writing a biography of the well known singer Kumari Lata Mangeshkar. She has been working with the All India Radio, and is at present posted at Bombay.
>
> The Award book, *Meri Kavita Mere Geet,* is the most recent collection of her poems in Dogri which were written during the first decade of her literary career. Most of these poems focus on the pain and the ecstasy of a creative artist. For its colourful imagery, intensity of expression and freshness of outlook, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Dogri literature."

Padma Sachdev is the first major Dogri poetess and perhaps the best and most widely known outside Dogri literary circles. *Meri Kavita Mere Geet* is her first collection of poems. It contains 51 poems and songs written over a period of about fourteen years, and it gives a glimpse of different moods, concerns, feelings and thoughts of the poetess during this eventful period. This glimpse shows the poetess as a very interesting and sincere person; a woman to the core brimming with love and longing, lively and bright even under the darkest clouds, concerned for the well-being and security of her dear Duggar Dogra people.

"Raje diyan Mandiyan" is a poem of sharp social consciousness, highlighting the juxtaposition of extreme penury and abundant affluence, exploitation of the former by the latter over generations, and of slums and palaces. Her questioning is direct, blunt and insistent. The tone is one of helplessness and rebellion.

The major subjects of her poems are childhood memories, memories of days in the mother's house, total carefreeness, freedom, unsolicited love; adolescent love growing into passion for the lover, the pain and suffering of waiting and separation; desire to be free, to capture moments and fleeting joys, and some aspects of nature.

Childhood memories are like honey to her that she clings to them as a psychological compensation for an unhappy married life (first marriage) with her in-laws, or is it that she had not had enough of the joy of childhood and was married too young? In a poem called "Des Nakala", she asks, "Who says being married off is not banishment from

home?" In a song, she prays that somebody should bring to her a message from her mother and cool breeze from her mother's house, full of jasmine fragrance should waft towards her.

If preoccupation with memories of the past appeared to be a type of escapism, sentiments expressing desire to be free, to fly, to lose herself in getting wet in rain are another type of escapism, an escape into nature–the falling rain, sky, moonlight, flowers, springs, streams, and even dark shadow. In yet another poem "Phagari Lain Gasa diyan Bahman", she wants to catch the sky by the arms, to drink up the infinite fragrance of flowers, to hold in her hands the slender streams flowing from the hearts of the mountains, to fill her eyes with all the beautiful sights and people and to fly away by placing her bare feet on the shoulders of the earth.

Most of the poems in the collection are devoted to the sentiment of woman's love for her lover in its various aspects. Some of these poems are marked by repetition and cliches. But "Bhadron Nain Rohai Kannen Bhanniyan Du-arian" is a beautiful poem in which the feelings of the woman awaiting her separated lover in pouring rain are imaginatively and sensitively delineated as nature becoming one with the woman. There is a sort of transference of these feelings to trees, buds, barges and patter of rain. The patter of rain leaking through a ceiling above sounds like the fall of hoofs of the horse bringing home the warrior-lover for whom the rain has washed and sun has gilded the path.

Shivanath

1972 Award

Shrivats Vikal'

Phull Bina Dali

Arunrashim Prakashan, Ramnagar; year xii+242 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"The late Shrivats Vikal (1930-70) was born in a family of erudite pandits at Ramnagar, Jammu. Sri Vikal lost his mother before he was one and his father when he was only fifteen years old. He had, therefore, to face a hard struggle for his education and sustenance and had to move from place to place in search of more congenial

circumstances. In the process he contracted tuberculosis and was hospitalised for sometime. In 1966 he was appointed as a religious teacher in the army and was later posted at Tejpur, Assam, where he suffered from serious heart attacks and breathed his last in 1970.

Sri Vikal started writing short stories and poems when he was twenty and contributed profusely to the leading literary periodicals of the day. Besides Dogri, he also wrote in Hindi and received several prizes in short story competitions. Many of his writings still remain unpublished.

The Award book, *Phull Bina Dali*, is his first novel written at Tejpur and published posthumously. For enriching a hither-to neglected branch of Dogri literature and for its narrative charm, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Dogri literature."

Phull Bina Dali is the last creation of Shrivats Vikal. The novel deals with the social problems of Duggar and the psychic study of a young Dogra woman, Soma, who confronts various hostile forces quite courageously.

In exceptionally fluent and idiomatic Dogri, the novelist deals with the day-to-day problems faced by the people. He has identified the deeply rooted orthodoxy as the main cause. According to him, the ideals of 'Arya Samaj' are the only viable alternative to it.

The beauty of the novel lies in the sincerity of the writer, who has presented various local problems of the hilly terrain of Jammu with authenticity. Some of the situations of the novel are remarkable. The mental agony of Soma, a young widow, her initial hesitation in accepting Swdesh as her lover, her final decision to marry him and to be an inspiring life partner, show understanding of the various recesses of the female heart. The way the novelist has portrayed the mental conflict that grips Soma, whenever she remembers the happy days that she spent in the loving company of her late husband and her moral duty towards her new life partner elevates the story of a married widow to new literary heights.

The novelist seems to possess a romantic outlook towards life, but his approach towards social complexities is absolutely realistic.

The novel has few parallels in Dogri literature, so far as the art of characterisation is concerned. The novelist has created forty-one characters, barring one or two, all are three-dimensional. Even the minor

characters appearing once or twice in the story leave ineffaceable imprint in the minds of the readers.

Through this novel Shrivats Vikal has not only enriched Dogri fiction, but also given a new verve to Dogri language and prose.

Om Goswami

1974 Award

Madan Mohan Sharma

Duddh, Lahoo, Zahar

Tara Parkashan, Jammu; 1971; 130 pp.; Rs. 4.00

> "Sri Madan Mohan Sharma, distinguished Dogri short story writer, was born in 1934. His literary career started from his school days. He is at present Professor of English at Jammu. He is the author of the first Dogri novel, published in 1960, five collections of short stories, one full-length play, an anthology of one-act plays and two collections of radio-plays. He has translated some Russian and French stories in Dogri.
>
> *Duddh, Lahoo, Zahar* is considered an outstanding contribution to Dogri language for its psychological insight and humanism."

Duddh, Lahoo, Zahar has twelve stories, eight portraying stalking death, in two, death causing shock, while two others are told in a lighter vein. Skilfully conceived the stories are set in a boozy alchoholic atmosphere of moral turpitude and vice. If he meant to confront readers with the wretched, Madan Mohan has ably succeeded, and with geniality towards his characters who are lower middle class. Seven stories have a private nexus of first person relationships, and how problems of an anecdotal interest, of confessions which impart an air of genuineness. These stories are in a genre of their own, in themes, quality, form and style. Except two, his stories closely a lifestyle of sin. His intellectual touch does not divert his genius to an inspiring and elevating outlook. His words spill poignant helplessness and the death of a dream. Whatever human frailties he tackles are presented with

psychological justification. These stories have a traditional setting and sensibility but appear to be sacrilegious and scandalous.

J.C. Sathe

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1975 Award

Krishna Smailpuri

Mere Dogri Geet

Deepak Publishers, Jallandhar; 1974; 120 pp.; Rs. 12.00

> "Sri Krishna Smailpuri, distinguished Dogri poet and lyricist, was born in 1900. He attained fame as a Urdu poet at the age of eighteen. He has made significant contribution to Urdu journalism in Jammu and Kashmir. He has been writing in Dogri for the last twenty-eight years and has composed hundreds of Dogri lyrics and ghazals. He has been honoured by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages. He co-edited the Dogri monthly *Fulwari* for the last seven years. He has so far published six books and *Phirdaus-e-Watan*, the collection of his Urdu poems, has received an award from the Jammu and Kashmir State Academy for Culture.
>
> *Mere Dogri Geet* is considered an outstanding contribution to Dogri literature for its distinguished craftsmanship, lyrical quality and metrical excellence, and its simplicity reminiscent of folk-songs."

Krishna Smailpuri entered the literary arena as an Urdu poet. By the early fifties he had realised that Dogri, his mother tongue, was the proper medium for his poetic expression.

Krishna Smailpuri's *Mere Dogri Geet*, as evident from its title, is a collection of Dogri lyrics (*geet*) including some devotional songs (*bhajans*) . Some of the songs carry the indication of the classical *raga* to which the composition is tuned, viz. "Bhajan Bhairavi", "Thumari Basant Bahaar", "Khyal Malkauns". Some three or four ghazals have also been included.

Krishna Smailpuri acquired the distinction of writing songs, in Dogri, mostly on love themes. In these lyrical compositions, he has been greatly influenced by the form and content of Dogri folk songs. He even tried to set these songs to popular tunes, a factor which made them sweeter and more popular.

Though some critics are critical of this extensive adoption of the spirit of the Dogri folk songs in his lyrics, others have tried to defend him by saying that "his work is like taking unchiselled diamonds and presenting them after giving them proper shape."

Anyhow, there are no two opinions about the fact that these lyrics fulfilled the timely demand of the radio singers and listeners, and there is no doubt that some of them gained much popularity.

R. N. Shastri

1976 Award

Ram Nath Shastri

Badnami Di Chhan

Dogri Sanstha, Jammu; 1973; 111 pp.; Rs. 4.00

> "Sri Ram Nath Shastri, distinguished Dogri short story writer and poet, was born in 1914. After a brief spell of teaching in a school, he joined the P.W. College, Jammu, as a Lecturer in Hindi-Sanskrit and retired as Professor in Sanskrit in 1970. A pioneer figure in modern Dogri, he has several volumes of poems, short stories, plays, and criticism to his credit. He has also translated a number of Indian and western classics into Dogri. He is the recipient of a literary award by the All India Bengali Literary Conference held at Srinagar in 1969 and a Robe of Honour by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in 1974.
>
> *Badnami Di Chhan* is considered an outstanding contribution to Dogri literature for the variety and richness of the themes of its stories and its maturity of thought and virtuosity."

This book by Ram Nath Shastri contains six of his best short stories. In the Introduction to these short stories, Shastri talks about the impor-

tance of imagination and technique in fiction but he considers inspiration, which gives birth to these stories, as more important than either of the two factors. Shastri writes with a conscious aim, but his effort is not to propagate certain ideology but to represent or rather present certain values.

All these short stories present a viewpoint. Shastri does not believe in old and outdated values; he believes in equal rights for men and women. And his writing acquires a certain pungency, a satirical quality and an undercurrent of irony when he exposes the double standards in our society. In "Hor ke Kardi", he uses his sarcasm with full vigour: if second marriage is not sinful for a middle-aged Debu Pant, why should it be for a teenager Uma in whose case the first marriage was performed as a mere formality when she was only eight years old? And yet, it is Uma who has to leave her home because she is a woman. Similarly in "Badnami Di Chhan", people, particularly women, pass snide remarks against young and beautiful Sita who is married to a simpleton, years elder than her. They surmise that she must be having affairs with other men. Unmindful of all these, she keeps herself busy in sewing and stitching clothes in order to make a living and bring up her children. In "Garjde Badal, Milkdi Bijli", it is Soman who is involved in an unequal marriage, and our society does not come to the rescue of such women. In "Prane Raste, Namen Rahi", Alka is young and educated, who wants to marry a man of her choice, but meets with opposition from her father. But this story ends on a conventional note. In "Pati Da Bhaiwal", it is Mohini who is made to appear as a vamp, but is she really so? "Akhand Path" is essentially didactic.

These stories have a psychological approach. The language is idiomatic and appropriate to the situations and the characters. The dialogues are pithy and purposeful. Although Shastri is not a propagandist in his approach, one can feel where his sympathies lie. In "Prane Raste, Namen Rahi", Shastri betrays his own conservatism.

These short stories are a significant contribution to Dogri fiction.

Nilamber Dev Sharma

1977 Award

Kehari Singh 'Madhukar'

Main Mele Ra Janun

Neetu Prakashan, Jammu; 1976; viii+95 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Sri Kehari Singh 'Madhukar', distinguished Dogri poet, was born at Gura Salathian in Jammu district in 1930. A graduate in arts from Government Gandhi Memorial College, Jammu, he joined the Jammu Station of Radio Kashmir in 1950. From 1962 to 1974 he edited *Shiraza*, a quarterly journal of Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. Besides three collections of his poems, he has written verse-plays for the radio and one-act plays. During his tenure as Editor in the Jammu and Kashmir Academy, he edited scores of Dogri publications. He has translated 101 poems by Tagore into Dogri and his own poems have been translated into a number of Indian languages. His *Dola Kun Thappia* received the Jammu and Kashmir Academy Award for 1964-65.

Main Mele Ra Janun is considered an outstanding contribution to Dogri literature for its deep human concern, richness of themes and a mastery over diction and style."

In the present collection *Main Mele Ra Janun*, Madhukar appears before us as a poet of intense feelings and emotions, but retaining at the same time, his strong sense of reason and commonsense. His idealism is chastened by his realism and his strong desire to change the uncertain present by a promising future. In these poems, Madhukar's personal despondency is overcome by his faith in mankind and its better future.

There is a lyrical intensity coupled with metrical virtuosity in these poems. There is a consistent development and a natural upholding of an idea in most of his poems, but in his "Baran Kavitan", which is actually twelve brief poems dazzled by the flashes of a genius. "Tan", "Kohlu", "Dhruva Tare", "Intezari", "Meet", "Kuari Bainta," "Kori Kalpna," "Charcha", "Sach," "Pheri", "Vapsi", "Nama Itihas", "Astha" and "Hak" are not only some of Madhukar's best poems contained in this collection, but also some of the best poems in Dogri. Here, we see

Madhukar's lucidity of expression, sweet diction, fine and unusual imagery. His control over his emotions and diction is complete, and the blend of these qualities makes *Main Mele Ra Janun* land mark in modern Dogri poetry.

Nilamber Dev Sharma

1978 Award

Narsingh Dev Jamwal

Sanjhi Dharti Bakhle Manu

Kamala Jamwal, Jammu; 1976; iv+368 pp.; Rs. 12.00

> "Sri Narsingh Dev Jamwal, distinguished Dogri novelist and playwright, was born at Bhalwal in Jammu district in 1931. He joined the Jammu & Kashmir State Forces at the age of 14 and was taken a Prisoner of War during 1948-50. Leaving the army in 1951, he served briefly in the Indian Air Force before finally joining the Jammu & Kashmir State Police as a constable. Sri Jamwal, who has now risen to the rank of an inspector, has ten books to his credit, consisting of the Award-winning novel, short stories, plays and poems. He is also a painter and sculptor and has put up many one-man exhibitions and won a number of awards. He has been a keen sportsman and is a member of several cultural and literary bodies, including the Sahitya Akademi Advisory Board for Dogri.
>
> *Sanjhi Dharti Bakhle Manu* is considered an outstanding contribution to Dogri literature for its rich human content, creative imagination, an empathetic understanding of the milieu, and superb craftsmanship."

The novel, *Sanjhi Dharti Bakhle Manu* is uncoventional because of its context and matter. Prior to its publication, Dogri fiction portrayed only country life vaguely with stray thoughts and an occasional touch of universal appeal. This novel, for the first time created an image of military life, its irony, and wove a socio-romantic structure around the rank and file.

The whole story is spread over thirty years from 1935 to 1965. Military disturbances, division of the country, the effect of secular forces of divisive issues which give birth to conflicting situations in deteriorating politics are the themes of the novel. There are three distinct phases in the novel. Schoolmates and good friends Akram and Ranjeet find themselves in Doon Military School after their schooling at Poonch. Both are posted in Sialkot sector after being trained. Again they meet each other after a long interval of tiresome fighting but destiny plays a crucial role. The second phase of the novel highlights the division of the country, and the death of Ranjeet's father in communal riots, which creates a gulf between Ranjeet and Akram. Ranjeet progresses to the post of brigadier and his son Gajraj Singh gets the Commission. In the third phase of the novel Rajeet and Akram are placed face to face in emotion-packed situations after the 1965 conflict between India and Pakistan.

A gap of eighteen years has created a great crater in relations between Ranjeet and Akram. Despite persuasion, Akram can not bring Ranjeet to recognise their relationship, but the common loss of both the soldiers brings the light of recognition in their eyes.

The author explores new horizons of subject and its treatment, but as far as his approach is concerned most of the real situations are marred by the idealistic and too emotional patches which influence natural events in order to please Dogra readers who have been attuned to romantic writing. The language of the novel is in simple Jammuite Dogri devoid of any touch of chaste rural dialect. The treatment of the subject is so simple that for a common Dogra reader it is a feast.

Ashok Jerath

ENGLISH

1960 Award

R.K. Narayan

The Guide

The Bodley Head, London; 1958; 221 pp.

> "Sri R.K. Narayan (b. 1906) whose reputation as a novelist and short story writer of distinction has been long well established, both in India and abroad. Like several other novels of his, *The Guide* also deals with a pattern of life in Malgudi, a dear little place somewhere in South India, which is none the less real because it is fictitious. Malgudi is located in no map of India and therefore may be found everywhere. The author's gift of characterisation and vivid descriptions, his delicate humour and keen sense of irony, free of bitterness or morbidity, make this book as delightful as it is stimulating."

The Guide is easily Narayan's finest novel. Perhaps nowhere else is his irony sharper or more firmly wedded to the moral imagination; nor has his technique been subtler. The central theme is ironic reversal, which piles comic complication upon complication until finally the pyramid collapses, crushing the hero to death.

'Railway Raju', a tourist guide, has an affair with Rosie, the unhappy wife of an unworldly scholar and makes her a successful professional dancer but is jailed for forgery, trying to prevent a possible reconciliation between her and her husband. Mistaken for a *sadhu* upon his release, he is prompted both by necessity and vanity to play the part well. The saint's halo, however, becomes a deadly noose, when he is compelled to die fasting, to bring rain to a drought-stricken village.

Raju's transformation from a railway 'guide' into a guru is shown through a deftly worked out pattern of ironic developments, which raise many disturbing questions about human motives and actions, compelling us to ponder over problems such as appearance and reality, the man and the mask, and ends and means.

Narayan's fictional technique is also unusually experimental in *The Guide*. The narrative alternates between the present and the past, thereby emphasising how Raju's present is inexorably rooted in his past. The blend of the omniscient and the autobiographical methods of narration endows the story with a double perspective. The novel, which opens with Raju in the village temple about to be reverentially accepted as a *sadhu* also ends in the same locality with his death, thus giving the tale a perfectly rounded, circular structure. Narayan's unfailing sense of place brings to life the setting of Malgudi and its environs admirably.

Its thematic richness and technical complexity make *The Guide* indubitably one of the most notable achievements in Indo-English fiction.

M.K.Naik

1963 Award

Raja Rao

The Serpent and the Rope

John Murray, London; 1960; 414 pp.

> "Sri Raja Rao (b. 1909) is a distinguished writer of Indo-Anglian fiction. Born in South India and steeped in the cultural heritage of the East, Sri Raja Rao has spent a number of years abroad and is admirably equipped for bringing the East and the West nearer each other.
>
> The Award book *The Serpent and the Rope* is the story of this meeting of two cultures with their underlying spiritual quest and exploration of fundamental values of life. For its distinctive style and use of language and its sustained intellectual quality the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to Indo-Anglian literature."

Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* has been hailed as a truly great Indian novel rooted in the native tradition, a new epical work

of fiction in the Puranic narrative style of distinct originality, the spiritual autobiography of the central figure, Ramaswamy, and his quest for self-knowledge. Rama's story moves through India, France and England and he is a complex, fascinating character. He marries Madeleine but their marriage of minds breaks partly because, in seeking human answers to her problems, she moves closer to Buddhism. The scene shifts from East to West and Rama presents the picture of an intellectual exile. He is deeply devoted to his Little Mother and Saroja, his plaintive step-sister. He is attracted to Savithri the Cambridge-educated sensitive lady, whom he ritually marries. These women keep the novel on the human plane and save it from becoming a pure, dry, metaphysical discourse. However, the novel has been criticised for its prolixity, artificiality, stock imagery, abstruse non-conversations and philosophical heavy-going substance. However, these charges seem pointless once the Indianness of its structure and vision are accepted and realized. Its philosophical disquistions, repetitive structures and metaphysical imagery make it appear as a new sacred text, a cryptogram with varying degrees of awareness. Rama shows similarities with Siddhartha, Sankara and the great legendary hero of the *Ramayana*. Facts of life are given the value of symbols and they pattern themselves into a spiritual texture. Misunderstandings arising out of the apparent paradoxical blend of worldliness and detachment are cleared when it is realized that *The Serpent and the Rope* (symbols of illusion and reality) is a great work of art and thought rooted in the Indian tradition of spiritual heritage and sensibility and that it is marked by an 'achieved form' and an entirely original approach to the structure, use of language, and the making of the Indo-English novel.

Vasant A. Shahane

1965 Award

Verrier Elwin

The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin

Oxford University Press, Delhi; 1964; 365 pp.

"Dr. Verrier Elwin (1902-1964) was a distinghished anthropologist, humanist and author of many remarkable works on

tribal life in India. Born in England, a Bishop's son, Verrier Elwin had his education in Oxford and might have settled there as a clerical don, if a restless idealism and intellectual curiosity had not drawn him to India where he first came in the sprit of a Christian missionary and joined the Christa Seva Sangh in Poona. He was soon attracted to Gandhiji and realised that he could best follow Christ by identifying himself with the people of India. He severed his connection with the Church and went to live in a remote tribal village in Central India. Thenceforth his life was dedicated to the welfare of the 'tribal world'. Because he loved the simple, unsophisticated, so-called 'savages', he understood and interpreted their ways, customs, manners and morals in several remarkable books. He adopted Indian nationality, married an Indian wife and until his sudden death in Delhi in 1964 was Adviser to the Government of India for Tribal Affairs for the North-East Frontier Agency. In 1961 the President conferred on him 'Padma Bhushan.'

The Award book, *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* is the story of Dr. Elwin's remarkable life published after his death. Written with sincerity, courage and charm, it reveals a mind in which western and Indian idealism were uniquely blended, and is an outstanding contribution to contemporary Indian writing in English."

Autobiography is rather a dying genre, and this is perhaps as much a sign of our times as any. Ours is an age obssessed with hidden meanings; with 'underlying' meanings behind 'surface' meanings. And in such an age, an autobiography (which, almost by definition, claims to lay bare the truth about onself) is rather an obvious object of suspicion. But *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* is an autobiography with a difference. There is a marvellous innocence pervading the book, and this, combined with its pristine intelligence, makes it a book that has to be taken at its face value, that is, exactly as it was meant to be. There is nothing contrived about the book; and the sense of propriety that informs it is, in spite of the author's great education, instinctive, therefore, profound.

An Oxford theology don comes to India, as if in answer to an ancient call, at the height of the [illegible]ependence movement, to work the Christian Church. [illegible] comes under the influence

of Mahatma Gandhi, lives for a while in the great man's *ashram*, sharing his hut, and then, finally comes home among the tribals of Madhya Pradesh and those of Arunachal (NEFA as it used, then, to be called).

In a review as brief as this, it is impossible to give even a glimpse of the magical quality of this book. But if as professional academic I were asked what struck me as truly significant about this book, I would perhaps simply quote the following sentence from it: "The essence and art of anthropology is love. Without it nothing is fertile, nothing true." (p. 142)

Perhaps I would also point to two other things. First, Elwin's description of the atmosphere in the Anthropological Survey of India where he worked for a short period: "The atmosphere was academic in the worst sense; there were quarrels and jealousies; very little work was done" (p. 202). I would say that this is a fairly accurate description of the atmosphere in almost every institution of higher learning in our country today. Secondly, I would point to his distaste for academic jargon of a certain kind because it is proof only of the barrenness of intellect and consequent distortions of perception. I think one of the things which lend the quality of permanence to Elwin's work as an anthropologist is this freedom from jargon.

But the true virtue of this book is its utter wholeness, a wholeness that may characterize a great work of art, a wholeness that is achieved only through great love.

Mrinal Miri

1967 Award

Bhabani Bhattacharya

Shadow From Ladakh

W.H. Allen and Company, London; *1967; viii+373 pp.*

"Sri Bhabani Bhattacharya (b. 1906) is a distinghished author and novelist. After his education at the Patna University, Sri Bhattacharya went over to England for advanced studies from where he received the Honours and the Ph. D. degrees of

the Univsersity of London. He worked for a time as Press Attache at the Embassy of India in Washington and as Assistant Editor, *The Illustrated Weekly of India* of Bombay. Sri Bhattacharya has travelled widely in India and abroad as a participant in various international seminars and as a guest of the British Council, the Writers' Union of the USSR and the Governments of Australia and West Germany. He has also received the Prestige Award of the University of New Zealand.

A writer of considerable sensitivity and charm, Sri Bhattacharya made his mark with his very first novel *So Many Hungers* which was published in 1949. It was followed by *Music for Mohini* (1952) and *He Who Rides A Tiger* (1954) in quick succession. In his novels Sri Bhattacharya has depicted a cross-section of contemporary India during a period of transition and rapid development, and has reflected the intricate pattern of present-day life with a remarkable understanding and clarity. His novels have been translated in many foreign languages.

The Award book, *Shadow From Ladakh,* depicts vividly and poignantly the clash of ideologies during a very critical phase of recent Indian history. For its insight into the contemporary mind, its realism and vitality, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary English writing in India."

Strongly influenced by Tagore and Gandhi, Bhabani Bhattacharya believes that "art must teach, but unobtrusively by its vivid interpretation of life. Art must preach but only by virtue of it being a vehicle of truth." He is convinced that "a novel must have a social purpose. It must place before the reader something from the society's point of view." These ideas have evidently contributed to the making of *Shadow From Ladakh*, a topical novel set against the background of the Chinese invasion of India in 1962.

Ostensibly a novel of ideas, *Shadow From Ladakh* contrasts the Gandhism of Satyajit Sen, a veteran freedom-fighter and a man of a saintly character from Gandhigram with the militant scientism of Bhashkar, the young and dynamic chief engineer of Steeltown. When the war breaks out, Bhashkar proposes to take over Gandhigram in order to step up industrial production. Satyajit's answer is a fast unto death in protest. As the fast progresses, the Steeltown workers themselves start supporting Satyajit and ultimately Bhashkar agrees

to postpone the take-over, by making suitable changes in the expansion project.

Though Gandhism wins in the end, Bhattacharya holds the scales even by pinpointing the limitations of the Gandhian philosophy in its practical application to human realities in the work-a-day world. Thus, Satyajit's attempts to put Gandhiji's doctrine of *Brahmacharya* into practice is hardly successful, and when he proposes a huge peace march to face the Chinese invaders on the border, the Government, though it swears by Gandhism, nips the idea in the bud, since it might further complicate a difficult situation. Above all, Satyajit's daughter Sumita herself is drawn to Bhashkar, and the union of the two at the end is symbolic of things to come in future. Sumita and Rupa–the half-Western woman who is the other girl in Bhashkar's life–are compared to the spinning wheel and the turbine respectively, but Rupa's exit clearly indicates the kind of compromise the novelist finally hopes for.

The war-motif enables Bhattacharya to hold the narrative line taut throughout and the novel makes absorbing reading, though it is arguable that it is not the supremely self-confident Bhashkar–Bhattacharya's symbol of the New India–who is the most impressive character, but Satyajit, with his old world loyalties and his nagging sense of failure. It is also a moot point whether the conflict between the old India and the new works merely on the surface level. Nevertheless, *Shadow From Ladakh* is a brave attempt to fashion a novel of ideas out of a topical narrative of exciting political and personal developments.

M.K. Naik

1969 Award

Niharranjan Ray

An Artist in Life

University of Kerala, Trivandrum; 1967; 480 pp.; Rs. 30.00

"Dr. Niharranjan Ray (b. 1903) is a distinguished scholar, educationist and author. Born at Mymensingh (now in East Pakistan) Sri Ray received his early education locally and then joined

88)", "Fruits of Maturity (1889-1900)." "Fruits of Offering (1901-13)", "The Nest and the Sky (1914-25)", "New Life: New Flowers and Fruits (1926-37)" and "The Sunset Glow (1937-41)." So poetically phrased, "and not without mixed mataphors, at odds with his own critical criteria, the classification may not convey much. Of six stages or phases, the last is perhaps the most rewarding, one reason being that it is more compact and also closer to our times. Part III deals with the poet's system of beliefs, his aesthetic and social philosophy or attitude, "Vision of Indian History." The book ends on a note of celebration, *a la* Tagore, of *chhandas*, or the rhythm of life and nature.

The reductive, naturalistic method and the evolutionary approach–"arriving by studying and exploring his life and art, item by item, stage by stage, aspect by aspect, at the knowledge of the inner law or laws according to which his personality and art evolved"–which Ray professes may not, however, by the best method to unravel "the inner drama of Tagore's life." He is too various (*vichitra*) to submit to any system. Luckily, Ray is too sensitive to be a strict ideologue, and some of the best things in his book are in the form of pertinent and provocative aside: on the Indian Renaissance, Nationalism, the Middle Class, History, Poetic Experience, Tradition and Individual Talent. Also, whether due to his Russian experience or not, the renewal and the social awareness in the last phase was remarkable and has been properly emphasized. But, is it right to say that Tagore's paintings, over which controversy will always be there, are symbols "of a direct and immediate confrontation with suffering and death?" Schizophrenia or, if that is too harsh a word, multiple personality might have covered the fact. Did the hands that write *Gitanjali* and *Balaka* paint these *Je ne sais quoi*?

Meant to be a homage than a critical examination, the book is more valuable, an overall survey than a literary assessment. *An Artist in Life* will help the non-Bengali reader to come to grips with a fascinating but paradoxical person of whom we have not heard the last. A shorter version of the book will be welcome.

Sisirkumar Ghose

Calcutta University where he qualified for Master of Arts in Indian history, culture and archaeology in 1926, and was appointed a Research Fellow and Lecturer. In 1934 he joined the Royal University of Leiden, Netherlands, as Research Associate and Lecturer for three years. On his return to Calcutta University in 1937, he was made a Reader and later, Professor of Indian history, art and culture. Since then Dr. Niharranjan Ray has held a number of academic positions in various universities at home and abroad and was for some time a member of the Rajya Sabha. Since 1965 he has been Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla.

Historian, art-critic and a man of letters the range of Dr. Ray's interests is as wide as his scholarship is deep. He is author of a large number of books in Bengali and English on diverse subjects in each of which he has made his mark as a critic of discernment and learning. He was awarded 'Padma Bhushan' by the President of India in 1969.

The award book, *An Artist in Life*, is a comprehensive study of the life and work of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. For its deep insight into the many facets of the genius and personality of the myriad-minded poet, for its masterly analysis and lucid exposition, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Indian writing in English."

Revaluation alone can show that Tagore is still alive. In his Kerala Centenary Lectures, a more of less revised version of his Bengali *Rabindrasahitver Bhumika*, Niharranjan Ray, a sensitive historian and litterateur, has tried to "bring out the nature and quality of the mind and personality" of Rabindranath. It is a tremendous task and here is an Everyman's Guide to a difficult terrain. Ray is devoted, confident and goes about the task with leisurely ease, not unmixed with critical insights.

Part I provides "an analytical study of the entire complex of contemporary life and movements and Tagore's reactions and responses to them"? (perhaps the matter could have been put more concisely). The implied determinism raises doubts. True, the emphasis is on the "mind and personality", but how relevant are "the entire complex of contemporary movements" to the enjoyment and understanding of, say, "Sonar Tari"? Part II, the bulk of the book, deals seriatim, with six phases of the poet: "Germination and Early Blossom (1872-

88)", "Fruits of Maturity (1889-1900)." "Fruits of Offering (1901-13)", "The Nest and the Sky (1914-25)", "New Life: New Flowers and Fruits (1926-37)" and "The Sunset Glow (1937-41)." So poetically phrased, "and not without mixed mataphors, at odds with his own critical criteria, the classification may not convey much. Of six stages or phases, the last is perhaps the most rewarding, one reason being that it is more compact and also closer to our times. Part III deals with the poet's system of beliefs, his aesthetic and social philosophy or attitude, "Vision of Indian History." The book ends on a note of celebration, *a la* Tagore, of *chhandas*, or the rhythm of life and nature.

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Sisirkumar Ghose

1971 Award

Mulk Raj Anand

Morning Face

Kutub-Popular, Bombay; 1968; xii+571 pp.

"Dr. Mulk Raj Anand (b. 1905) is a distinguished novelist, essayist and art critic in English. Born in Peshawar (now in Pakistan) he was educated at the Punjab, London and Cambridge Universities. While in England he came in contact with modern political thought and was one of the founders of the Indian Progressive Writers' movement. He has been a Tagore Professor of Art and Literature at the Punjab University, Chandigarh, and a Visiting Professor of Art at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. He has been a member of the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi and Chairman of the Lalit Kala Akademi.

Besides novels and short stories, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand has written profusely on Art and other aspects of culture. His first novel, *Untouchable*, published in 1935, was written at the Sabarmati Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi. Among his publications *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud* and *Seven Summers* are equally well known. He also edits the Art quarterly *Marg*. The President of India has conferred on him the title of 'Padma Bhushan' in 1966.

The Award book, *Morning Face*, is an autobiographical novel of epic dimensions first published in 1968. It is an attempt to reveal the tragic human situation in the changing India of the last half-a-century. For its wide sweep and realistic characterisation, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Indian writing in English."

The Morning Face is the long and first volume of an ambitious series of seven autobiographical works. The novel is set in Punjab during the violent, passionate years of Lala Lajpat Rai, the Rowlatt acts and Jallianwalla Bagh. Picturesque in technique, the novel puts together a series of episodes in the life of a boy named Krishna whose family is forced to move from place to place. The novel's primary thematic

intention is to recall in very great detail every small event which could have affected Krishna during his childhood and to record his fears and sensations as an adolescent. The idea, of course, is to make a portrait of a novelist as a child and to trace the process of his education. Thus, we are repeatedly told of Krishna's jealousy of his brother and the insensitivity of his father who is in the colonial army; we often find him the object of the homo-erotic desires of a variety of muscular school-masters and the sadism of policemen; we are frequently asked to sympathize with his dream of becoming a writer and with his adolescent need to resolve his sexual puzzlements in the embraces of the preserving, nurturing and maternal woman he meets; and, we are given, in an undisciplined manner, the entire process of his rebellion against his father and told about his dissatisfactions with the political sanity of his elders. The novel ends when the adolescent Krishna learns to deal confidently with his sexuality and to assert, after reading Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, his own political identity.

Alok Bhalla

1975 Award

Nirad C. Chaudhuri

Scholar Extraordinary

Chatto and Windus, London; 1974; 382 pp.

"Sri Nirad C. Chaudhury, distinguished English author, was born in Kishoregunj (now in Bangladesh) in 1897. He graduated with first class honours in history from Calcutta University and took up journalism in 1926. For a few years he served in *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review* as Assistant Editor. He worked with the All India Radio from 1941 to 1952 and after his retirement is engaged in independent writing. He has contributed to some of the most reputed journals in India and abroad. The British Broadcasting Corporation has made a television film on him. His book *The Continent of Circe* was given the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize in 1966 and he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature of the United

of the most distinguished interpreter of ancient India. It is a brilliant biography–one of the finest in modern Indo-English writing.

Vasant A. Shahane

1976 Award

S. Gopal

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1947)

Jonathan Cape, Great Britain; 1975; 398 pp.

"Dr. S. Gopal, distinguished biographer-historian in English, was born in 1923. He was educated at Madras and Oxford and earned his D. Phil. and D.Litt. degrees from the Oxford University. He taught at the Andhra University before joining the National Archives of India in 1952. He was the Director of the Historical Division of the Ministry of External Affairs during 1954-66. He has also been a Commonwealth Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, and a Reader in South Asian History at Oxford. For some years the Chairman of National Book Trust, he is now the Professor of Contemporary History at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and the General Editor of the Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru. His publications include 'The Permanent Settlement in Bengal', 'British Policy in India', and 'Modern India'.

Jawaharlal Nehru is considered an outstanding contribution to Indian literature written in English for its scrupulous objectivity, vivid presentatin of events, high literary quality and the portrayal of a great and complex personality."

Born to luxury, endowed with good looks and a fine intellect, educated at Harrow and Cambridge, Jawaharlal Nehru was certainly the 'darling of the gods'. But the *devanampriya* came under the spell of Mahatma Gandhi and chose imprisonment, struggle and a life of uncertainty. Thus he became the darling of the Indian masses. The years of struggle and the moment of fulfilment on the night of 15 August 1947 are the subject of Sarvepalli Gopal's account of Jawaharlal's life.

Kingdom in 1975. Among his major works are *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, A Passage to England, Clive of India,* and *Scholar Extraordinary.*

Scholar Extraordinary is considered an outstanding contribution to English literature not only for its excellence as a biography of the renowned Indologist Max Mueller but also for its high literary qualities, vigorous style and its exposition of the intellectual, religious and cultural movements of the era."

Scholar Extraordinary is a personal, literary and critical biography of the well-known orientalist, Friedrich Max Muller (1823-1900). It narrates the early life of Max Muller, his beginnings in Ruritania, wanderings in Europe as a diplomat, life in Oxford, friendship with Arnold, Froude, Wilson, acceptance of the Oxford chair, and meeting Beata Georgina, who later married him–these events are succintly narrated in the first part.

Part II dwells on Muller's quest as a scholar extraordinary, his work as an orientalist, the translation of the *Rig Veda* and other writings. To him, as to Hegel, India was an enchanted land filled with ancient wisdom which required studious interpretation. He devoted his whole life to interpreting India's Sanskrit heritage. Muller's rather intricate relationship with Georgina, a modern Heloise, is unfolded. For her, "love was inseparable from religion and morality." Their love finally triumphed, though he had to sign the 'thirty-nine articles'.

Chaudhuri perceptively analyses the quality of Muller's mind–"speculative, philosophical and metaphysical"–yet prone to generalisation. His pioneering efforts in linguistic studies are highlighted against the contemporary Oxford–'dark and bright'.

Part III elucidates Muller's scholarly and political polemics and encounters with Darwin. His friendship with Indians, especially Keshab Chandra Sen and Pandita Ramabai is touchingly portrayed. However, Muller's limitations and failings are not ignored. His uncritical praise of the British administration in India and his view that "India is Christ's and Christ is India's" are questionable. Muller's last farewell (he died, October 28, 1900) is reflected in the touching words: "Do not grieve at my passing away since it is natural to die."

Scholar Extraordinary depicts Max Muller's private and public worlds, his pioneering achievements and curious failings. It is a fine portrait

of the most distinguished interpreter of ancient India. It is a brilliant biography–one of the finest in modern Indo-English writing.

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Jawaharlal, the cossetted child of Motilal and Swaruprani; the well-to-do student abroad; "music concerts, golf at Crowborough, tennis at the Queen's Club, watching cricket at Lord's and waltzing on icerinks, rather than attending lectures at the L.S.E. and devilling at the law"; returns to India and marriage with Kamala; enters into politics and the Vice-Presidentship of the Allahabad District Congress Committee; plunges into action in Pratabgarh and Rae Bareli; imprisoned at Nabha for the sake of the Akali Dal; boycotts Simon Commission and national popularity; is President of the Congress; Salt Satyagraha; is imprisoned again; tussles within the party; the uneasy but enduring ties with Gandhi; widower; socialist; internationalist; the unhesitating critic of Nazism and Fascism; the chosen successor of Gandhi; the first Premier of Independent India. It is a saga of anxiety, hard work, hope and fulfilment. A story to inspire future generations.

In his telling, Sarvepalli Gopal is not all adulation for the hero of his youth and this makes the biography eminently readable. For instance, Jawharlal Nehru's marital life is seen in proper perspective:

"Many women, drawn by his charm or driven by snobbery, made claims on him and, especially after Kamala's death, sought to thrust themselves into his life; and he did not always firmly resist their gross ardours. Yet, despite occasional dalliances, Kamala was the only woman who ever meant anything to him; and he kept her image unsullied."

Jawaharlal's personal courage and adherence to political convictions are shown along with his indecisive, Hamlet-like postures and impotent rages. Jawaharlal could produce vast tomes with a clear unified theme even in prisons and dash off sentences that have a Biblical finality.

Occasionally Sarvepalli Gopal loses the fair-sense of a historian-biographer and belittles political stalwarts and patriots, perhaps for the sake of contrastive elegance. There is no need for this self-defeating exercise. For the rest, the Prince Charming of our politically glorious years comes engagingly alive through this biography, aided by a portfolio of vintage photographs.

Prema Nandakumar

1977 Award

Chaman Nahal

Azadi

Arnold Heinemann Publishers (India), New Delhi; 1975; 371 pp. Rs.40.00

> "Sri Chaman Nahal, distinguished Indian novelist, critic and writer of short stories in English, was born at Sialkot, now in Pakistan, in 1927. He has a Master's degree in English from Delhi University and was awarded his Ph. D. from the University of Nottingham. He has been a British Council Scholar, a Senior Fulbright Fellow, a Visiting Lecturer in Malaysia and Japan and was a Visiting Professor at Long Island University, U.S.A., for five summers. He has published three novels, one collection of short stories, and studies on Ernest Hemingway and D.H. Lawrence. His articles have appeared in various journals in India, England and the USA.
>
> *Azadi* is considered an outstanding contribution to English literature written in India for its deeply moving depiction of the Partition of the sub-continent in 1947, upholding of essential human values, true-to-life characterisation and brilliant language and style."

Azadi is a novel planned and worked out meticulously. As the text of situations, themes and represented emotions had existed already there is not much scope left for the novelist to be innovative either in form or subject-matter to which he has added a touch of unconventionality in describing the integrated experiences of middle class Punjabis during the Partition of India in 1947. The book is neatly divided into three parts: "The Lull", "The Storm" and "The Aftermath"–and the force of tension, that holds them together, grows out of and between various kinds of truth that mirror and organize the structure of the plot–which has social, cultural and political factors on the one hand, economical, anthropological and even psychoanalytic aspects of human personality that build the personal crisis in the life of the protagonist, Lala Kansi Ram on the other. The first part of the book concentrates fully on human complexities, confusions even perversities that characterize the domestic relationship, community relationship and political relationship.

Nahal adopts the techniques of fragmentation of character and narrative as the major device to disassemble the puzzles of values, mores and personalities which enables a character to take refuge from the whole picture in its parts. If the major characters show a set, conventional deep-rooted development, the not so major or minor characters like Arun, Surya Prakash and even Gangu Mall are only a stock-resistent men who change their role at will, or have a minimal memory of or attachment to their past. This makes the novel absolutely modern despite its topical themes.

Azadi is the product of the mixed reactions of the Hindus towards Muslims, and towards the British rulers. Madness of a strange kind characterizes the social scene which finds its outlet in processions and the slogans of "Ya Ali/Ya Haider"–and other unnameable atrocities. Is it 'Purna Swaraj'–full *azadi*?–is the question that corrodes the minds of Chaudhary Berkat Ali and Lala Kansi Ram alike who took a vow together to fulfill Gandhiji's dream.

The second part of the book describes the life of the Hindus who left their homes and belongings and shifted to the camps to come to India. The arrival at the heart of India, Delhi and the life at Kingsway Camp on Alipur Road was a kind of death of a dream as the third part of the book, "The Aftermath" conveys. It is commendable that Nahal rules out subjective reactions and pre-planned interferences. If he excludes much of the griefs and sacrifices as they exist in the real world, it is understandable as he is primarily concerned with presenting people under pressure and their desperate measures against victimization.

T.R. Sharma

1978 Award

Anita Desai

Fire on the Mountain

Allied Publishers, Bombay; 1977; 145 pp.; Rs. 30.00

"Smt Anita Desai, distinguished Indo-English novelist and writer of short stories, was born at Mussoorie in 1937. She received her Degree in English Literature in 1957 from Miranda House,

University of Delhi. She has five novels, a collection of short stories and two books for children to her credit, which have been published in India, England and the United States. Some of her writings have been translated into Rumanian and Swedish. A member of the Sahitya Akademi Advisory Board for English, she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, England, in 1978. Her novel *Where Shall we go This Summer*? was given an award for excellence by the Author's and Publisher Guild of India in 1978 and her Sahitya Akademi Award-winning novel received the Winifred Holtby Prize for the best regional novel from the Royal Society of Literature, London.

Fire on the Mountain is considered an outstanding contribution to Indo-English literature for its depiction of the inner world of its characters, its perceptive quality, artistic intensity and graphic and poetic portrayal of scenes and sounds."

Anita Desai has always been concerned with the theme of loneliness, and each of her novels has dealt with a different kind of human isolation. Her first novel *Cry, the Peacock* evoked the loneliness of a neurotic woman heading towards a break-down. Her second, *Voices in the City* focussed on the claustrophobia of a sensitive woman in a crowded joint family and in *Bye Bye Blackbird*, she brought out the isolation of the English wife of an Indian immigrant in London who could not belong anywhere.

Fire on the Mountain has not one, but two lonely protagonists. Nanda Kaul lives alone in the mountains, weary of life, battered and exhausted by her family. She has at last found peace amidst the pines and cicadas in Kasauli. She does not want it disturbed either by people or by feelings of any kind:

> She would be a charred tree-trunk in the forest, a broken pillar of marble in the desert; a lizard on the stone wall. A tree-trunk could not harbour irritation, nor a pillar annoyance. She could imitate death like lizard.

Her imitation of death is interrupted by the arrival of a great grand-daughter who turns out to be as secretive as the old woman, as chary of human contact. Thin and frightened, this girl is the most credible character in the novel, her responses and withdrawal revealing the disturbed state of her parents' marriage. The lonely old woman

and the lonely little girl spend a summer together in the hills, uneasy and cagey within their respective cocoons. Something smoulders all through the novel to explode at the end suddenly with a murder, a rape and a forest fire. The fire on the mountain is deliberately ignited by the timid little girl.

Anita Desai's characters live mainly through their senses. Tremulous and fragile, they savour each moment with a heightened consciousness. Her prose continues to be heady; the highly charged and sensuous use of words familiar to her readers is still there:

> The sunlight thickened. No longer lacquered, it turned to glue. Flies, too lazy for flight were caught in the midday web and buzzed languorously.

This luminous and sensory awareness of the texture of life marks every page of the novel.

It is not meant to be a novel where the plot or action is of central importance, even though the last few pages do contain some violent action. What matters most is the evocation of a mood through words. The landscape and the emotions are drawn in soft and muted colours to dissolve in a sudden splash of hues at the traumatic end.

Meenakshi Mukherjee

GUJARATI

1955 Award

Mahadev Desai

Mahadev Bhaini Diary

Navjivan Prakashan Mandir, Ahmedabad; Vol. I, 1948, 410 pp., Rs. 4.8.0; Vol. II, 1949, 506 pp., Rs. 5.6.0; Vol. III, 1949, 522 pp.; Vol. IV, 1950, 256 pp., Rs. 3.0.0; Vol. V, 1951, 506 pp., Rs. 7.0.0

In Gujarati, this is one of the rare and valuable diaries having literary excellence as well as remarkable exposition of the character of one of the most eminent personalities of world-wide stature, namely Mahatma Gandhi. As such the work is a noteworthy contribution to the diary-literature of the world but also for the presentation of the day-to-day life of a great saint. Mahadev Desai was Gandhiji's personal assistant and a devoted disciple for twenty-five years from 1917 to 1942. He maintained a diary for all these 25 years. The first volume is the best, covering the period between 10-3-1932 and 4-9-1932.

Though it is a diary written by Mahadev Desai, the author has subdued himself completely to the towering personality of Gandhiji. The author is not interested in writing about himself. Gandhiji is always at the centre. Mahadev Desai is actually a Boswell of Gandhiji. The reader is engrossed in the splendid manifestation of the saintly character of Gandhiji. A pious sentiment resembling that of the Akhyayikas of Lord Buddha is experienced throughtout the work.

The first volume is more or less a dramtic performance by three great men–Gandhiji, Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Mahadev Desai, on the stage of the Yeravada Jail. They are more or less like Rama, Lakshmana and Hanumana. But here Lakshmana has a sense of humour and satire, which is directed to all, including the master. Sardar's humour lightened the harshness and boredom of the jail life. The most interesting part is the delineation of the great and small moments in a saint's life. Here one gets rare glimpses of

how a saint, endowed with intuition, behaves in his day-to-day life; the venue in this diary is Yeravada Jail, but it is converted into a pietistic place of penance.

The author has submerged his personality in that of the master as if he was an integral part of the master, losing his identity completely to the master. Once Kakasaheb Kalelkar asked Gandhiji to send Mahadev to visit the Gersappa Falls; Gandhiji replied that Mahadev will not come, because he himself was the 'Gersappa' of Mahadev. The author has the gift of a brilliant and lucid style which enhances the literary merit of the work.

I.R. Dave

1956 Award

Ramnarayan Pathak

Brihat-Pingal

Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, Bombay; 1955; 728 pp.; Rs. 15.0.0

Brihat-Pingal is Pathak's posthumous publication and his *magnum opus.* Pathak, unlike other writers, does not treat every metre as a separate entity, nor does he restrict himself to the discussion of only the *asharmel*, *matramel* and *samkhyamel* metres obtaining in Gujarati. He also discusses the nature of the *padas* or *deshis* of the mediaeval period and the ghazal of the post-1850 period. He, again, does not stop at the discussion of the mere technique, but also discusses the fundamentals that govern the inter-relationship of various metres that contribute to their growth and development. This raises the book to the level of the philosophy of prosody.

The book is divided into 15 chapters. Each chapter gives the author's coherent conception of the subject dealt with in it and the appendices given at the end of the chapter discuss in detail, questions arising directly or indirectly from the conception itself.

Since the approach is novel, and the discussion relates to the fundamentals of prosody, which are common to most of the major Indian languages. Pathak has got the book printed in Devanagari

script so that scholars of prosody in other languages can also consider the theory and methodology advanced by him.

Mansukhlal Jhaveri

1958 Award

Pandit Sukhlal

Darshan ane Chintan

Pandit Sukhlalji Sanman Samiti, Gujrat Vidyasabha, Ahmedabad; 1957; Vol. I, 1264 pp.; Vol. II, 364 pp.; Rs. 14.0.0

> "Sri Pandit Sukhlal was born in Limli village in Jhalavad. Despite the loss of his eyesight at the age of 16, he studied Sanskrit, Prakrit and Gujarati in Kashi and Mithila and edited many important Jain, Prakrit and Sanskrit texts. Author of twenty-four books, distinguished sociologist and philosopher, Pandit Sukhlalji's writings are marked by a deep spirit of synthesis which springs from his faith in non-violence as the supreme principle of life."

In *Darshan ane Chintan*, we find learned essays and articles on the manifold aspects of Jain and Hindu religion and culture. Though the author lost his eyesight in early childhood, he had ceaselessly pursued his studies in religion, culture and literature. We are struck by his wonderful memory, impartial outlook, logical approach and originality of interpretation. He is not an orthodox Jain or Hindu; he has a wider perspective of religion and culture. In some of his discourses on religion, he attains the stature of eminent *acharyas*. Though he uses philosophical terminology, he is careful to explain everything in simple language. His style is neither verbose nor high-sounding.

He has given his well-considered views on religion, culture, society, reforms, education, religious education, ethics, democracy, etc. owing to a comprehensive view of life. Sometimes we find that he has not approved of everything that is ancient or traditional for instance, the joint family system. His originality is seen in so many places. He thinks that Rishipanchami is, in all probability, originally

Rishabhpanchami. In the Nachiketa episode, he considers Yama as not the Lord of Death, but as a Sadguru or Inner Soul. With rare insight he grasps the significance of the Shastric lore. The Shastras reveal their hidden meaning and import to him, as he is free from all prejudices which are associated with ordinary mortals. He is a man-of-Shastras, but his mind is always open to new ideas. *Darshan ane Chintan* places him firmly in the category of Saptarshis of Gujarat.

I.R. Dave

1960 Award

Rasiklal Chhotalal Parikh

Sharvilak

Gujar Grantharatna Karyalaya, Ahmedabad; 1957; xx + 216 pp.; Rs. 3.50

> "Sri Rasiklal Chhotalal Parikh (b. 1897), veteran Gujarati playwright has made a significant contribution to the Gujarati drama and stage. *Sharvilak* is a full-length play divided into five acts. Its story is based on the two Sanskrit classics : *Mrichchakatika* and *Daridra Charudatta*. While the author has skilfully drawn on these two sources, he has treated the plot in an entirely new way, thus making it an original creative work. His intimate knowledge of the historical and cultural background of the period adds to the interest of the play."

The salient feature of *Sharvilak* is its capability of creating a new category between an original and a translated work. This play is based on two Sanskrit plays *Daridra Charudatta* by Bhasa and *Mrichchakatika* by Shudrak, written about 2400 years ago. Not only that, certain portions of *Sharvilak* are nothing but the direct translation of the above Sanskrit plays. Moreover, the playwright has also made use of certain materials from *Pratignayogandharayan*, another Sanskrit play by Bhasa.

Yet, this work cannot be labelled as a piece of translation or even transcreation. The craftsmanship of the playwright is displayed

in turning an original 'Shrungar' (erotic) play into a socio-political play by efficiently changing the characterisation. At the same time the original love affair between Charuddatta and Vasantsena is not omitted here. But instead of focussing only on this couple, the playwright has given a new dimension of political revolution and coup which has deeply affected the whole city of Ujjayani. This is achieved by giving a totally new yet historical context to Sharvilak and a key-role to his beloved Madanika.

Along with this, we witness the fanaticism and political manipulations of Prime Minister Bharata Rohataka, the constant helpless movements of King Palaka from his court to his bedroom, events which lead queen Shwetapadma to search for her lover and the malice of Shakara, a character who remains as much of a clown as the villain. With the help of these new roles to the original characters, the entire city of the Ujjayani is enlivened in different layers before us and we can participate with the people of Ujjayani in political changes.

The only factor which has remained intact in the Sanskrit plays and *Sharvilak* is its romanticism. Although the predominence of 'Shrungara' (erotic) *rasa* is changed to 'Vira' (heroism) *rasa*, the play has to be classified only as romantic with its powerful characters. Leaving aside the medium, this play sustains the same interest and calibre of K.M. Munshi's historical novels. It has been rightly pointed out by the critics that because of the inclusion direct translations of some portions of the Sanskrit plays, the characterisation of *Sharavilak* has become inconsistent at many places and the number of scenes given to Charudatta and Vasantsena in comparison with Sharvilak and Madanika seem unnecessary. Similarly the style of Sanskrit drama and the form of tragedy of the west do not always strike a harmonious note. Whether the tragedy created by the deaths of Charudatta and Madanika is inevitable can be debated. The portraits of Bharata Rohataka, Shwetapadma, Palaka or Shakara as projected in the play seem much more impressive than the title role of Sharvilak. The image of Sharvilak is much talked about and less created by the playwright.

More than once and at different stages this play has been performed. So there is no reason why one should have any doubt about its stagebility. But looking at the size and the arrangement of some of the scenes, it is difficult to stage effectively in its present published

form. Of course, it does not mean that today, the play has lost its possibilities of performance.

In Gujarati drama literature this is very unusual effort and experiment to reincarnate a classic in its original way.

Utpal Bhayani

1961 Award

Ram Singhji Rathod

Kachhnun Sanskriti Darshan

Ram Singhji Rathod (the author), Ahmedabad; 1959; 302+54 pp.; Rs. 15.00

> "Sri Ram Singhji Rathod (b. 1917) is a distinguished historian and sociologist. *Kachhnun Sanskriti Darshan* is a comprehensive survey of the various aspects of life and culture in the Kutch region, including its folk-lore. The work bears witness to the author's extensive research in a field hitherto little explored, and is noted for its literary excellence."

Ram Singhji Rathod's work, *Kachhnun Sanskriti Darshan*, or glimpses into the cultural heritage of Kutch is an excellent document providing rich information on the geography, history, political structure, art, architecture, literature and economy of an island which is on one side linked to the northern part of Gujarat and on the other side to Pakistan. Being isolated geographically, Kutch's contribution in various facets of cultural life of larger Gujarat has remained unknown. The author deserves credit for bringing to light the culture of a society through his scholary examination in detail and thoroughness.

The entire book is divided into thirty chapters. The author, in the first 25 chapters, describes the geographical features, historical development and cultural specificity of each town. He dovotes about three chapters to highlighting folk literature, and to literary and archeological source materials available for studies of the rich culture of the area.

The author has exhibited rare scholarship and sensitivity, in presenting the material. He makes profuse use of puranic refer-

ences, folklore and legends in depicting the live throbbing features of that society. For instance, while describing Port Bhadreshwar, he not only refers to historical records but makes the narration interesting by introducing the story of a philanthropist merchant Jagdu Shah. Similarly, while referring to the temple of mother goddess (*Mata no gadh*), he uses liberal sources of folk songs which portray the legendary emergence of the temple.

Ram Singhji's work is enhanced in value through various pictorial illustrations. In fact, one wonders how a place so rich in arts and crafts has been relegated into oblivion. It is very disheartening to find that Kutch's place in contemporary India is due to the development of Kandla port, i.e. due to its material features and not cultural contributions.

However, the author has not sufficiently highlighted the sociological aspects of the Kutch society. The castes and classes, their specific customs and institutions, heir family life–all these which constitute an institutional culture, have not been dealt with in totality. Further, discussion on how various groups have influenced the cultural life of the area, would have helped the reader to get a holistic picture of this cultural heritage. Perhaps along with the mentioning of contributions of each sub-area, a description of the total picture of Kutch society would have helped in the understanding of the contraditiction, viz. rich cultural past and very commercial and traditional present.

Neera Desai

1962 Award

Vishnuprasad Ranchhodlal Trivedi

Upayana

Pushti Sanmana Samiti, Surat; 1961; 482 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri Vishnuprasad Ranchhodlal Trivedi (b. 1899) is a distinguished literary critic and educationist of Gujarat. Trivedi has served the cause of literature and education for the last forty years and was Professor of English and Gujarati and later

Vice-Principal of the M.T.B. College, Surat. He was elected last year as President of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad. His writings cover a long period and reveal a mind highly disciplined and eclectic and rich with warm sympathies. The award book, *Upayana*, is a representative collection of Prof. Trivedi's critical writings which are remarkable for their critical acumen and sensitive style."

Upayana is divided into four parts. The first part 'Anubhavana' includes 26 articles dealing with various aspects of literary aesthetics; the second part 'Modern Thoughtful Prose' contains his Bombay University lectures; the third part 'Reviews' contains 36 critical reviews of various Gujarati publications, mainly the anthologies of Gujarati poems and the fourth part contains articles by various noted writers of Gujarati, evaluating Trivedi's work and worth in various walks of his life.

As stated above, Trivedi's writings are on various aspects of literature, but his first love is, of course, poetry. His first critical writing is on G.M. Tripathi's novel *Sarasvatichandra*. Though it is a novel Trivedi deals with its poetic qualities and equates it with an epic. Thus Trivedi during the long span of his life comes to both *Poetics* and *Sarasvatichandra* fresher and deeper.

A profound student of aesthetics of both East and West, Trivedi develops himself in the assimilating process prescribed by Prof. Anandshankar Dhruv whom he considers his guru and as a result he has been able to evolve his own aesthetics of enduring value, which posterity will like to discuss in future with interest. Trivedi, a product of the Gandhian Era does uphold human values in creative literature but finally judges a piece of art only on aesthetics bases, that too, in such a language and style which are at once attractive, precise and compact; his language even in the Gandhian Era remains strictly scholastic as it was in the previous age.

The book contains a very important article by Dr. Umashankar Joshi who has thoroughly examined his critical abilities. Kaka Kalelkar has called him a literary sentinel. Prof. Yashvant Shukla, his disciple, has gone into the details of his life and career; Prof. C.C. Shah has evaluated him as an educationist. All these combine to project an all sided image of V.R. Trivedi who emerges at the end of the pursuit of this book, a humble yet a great personality of Gujarati and as a spokesman of the spirit of the age.

N.K. Pandya 'Ushanas'

1963 Award

Rajendra Shah

Shant Kolahal

Rajendra Shah (the author), Bombay; 1962; 128 pp.; Rs. 3.00

> "Sri Rajendra Shah (b. 1913) is one of the leading poets in Gujarati today. He made his mark with his very first collection of poems entitled *Dhvani* (1951). His later works proved him as a poet of fine sensibility and deep meditation. Although known as a classicist among the romantics, Sri Shah combines in his poetry a reflectiveness associated with tradition and a keen sense of beauty and love of the countryside. He has received several distinctions from the State and people of Gujarati.
>
> *Shant Kolahal* is his latest collection of poems, characterised by maturity and ripeness of experience and subtle manipulation of the poetic medium."

Shant Kolahal, a representative collection of poems by Rajendra Shah, one of the most outstanding Gujarati poets, brings out most of the qualities central to his lyrical and metaphysical poetry.

As the title signifies, the poet is attuned to music and his place primarily as a lyricist in Gujarati literature is significant. At his height, he sings out 'Vitui..Vitui Vit... twit.. twit..' like a high-flying bird. The flight is effortless and mystical. Longing for the loved one also finds lyrical expression on his songs:

> *"Ai vhalida, sanbhali leje Saad*
> *Ang Marane Vintalayo Chhe Nag"*
> (Oh loved one, please hear my cry,
> A serpent has wound itself round my limbs.) (p. 103)

Or

> *"Lagi re Lagan*
> *Piya Tori Lagi re Lagan"*
> (I am imbued with you,
> My loved one, I am fully imbued with you.) (p. 108)

It is noteworthy that the first eight poems of this collection (containing 127 poems) sub-titled "Ragini" are on eight Indian calssical *ragas* from 'Lalit' (morning *raga*) to 'Bhairavi' (a last piece in a musical concert). They represent nothing short of a word sculpture of the particular *raga.*

The poet is attuned to Nature in a mystical, cosmic way as can be felt in another group of his poems, sub-titled as "Vanvasina Gito", (Songs of a Forester). It is a thrilling voyage through woods of words and rhythms.

While the contemporary poets seem to express a strong strain of despair and nihilism, Rajendra Shah manages to free himself to sing the songs of Nature. His total concern seems to be woods and moods rather than socio-economic and socio-political experiences. At times, in conveying metaphysical and mystical undertones, he shows a tendency towards somewhat heavy, Sanskritised and Tagorian diction. Nevertheless, the poet succeeds in touching Nature and God in Man.

Jyotish Jani

1964 Award

Dolarrai R. Mankad

Naivedya

D.R. Mankad Shastipurti Sanman Samiti, Aliabada; 1961 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Sri Dolarrai R. Mankad (b. 1902) is a distinguished scholar and author. Educated at Jodiya, Rajkot, Junagadh and Karachi, he has an impressive record as teacher and professor of Sanskrit and Gujarati at several educational institutions. At present he is working as Director of Haribhai Research Institute, Aliabada. He has published a number of books, both in Gujarati and English, which bear witness to his deep interest in and knowledge of history, literature and education.

The Award book, *Naivedya*, is a collection of learned essays on diverse subjects, covering both classical Sanskrit literature

> and contemporary Gujarati literature. The author is at home in both the worlds and has succeeded in communicating to the reader his deep insight and his rare sense of equilibrium between the old and the new. For its wide knowledge, its deep insight and its power of expression, the book has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature."

Naivedya is a collection of research articles on subjects of the author's particular interest–language, literary trends and literary forms–as well as some of his prefaces and reviews. Every page is marked by clarity of thought and expression. We find here the author's strong convictions but no impatient intolerance. He allows facts to speak for themselves. His original approach reveals the truth and the process of research becomes a process of seeking the truth. One may not find all his observations acceptable in toto, but one enjoys the process that leads the author to them.

In one of his speeches on 'Tradition', a subject very close to his heart, he said that modern scholars begin from an assumption that the facts stored in tradition are never authentic and that the historicity of only those facts should be accepted which are supported by other evidence. Mankad instead advocated an approach in which it should be assumed that the facts asserted by tradition are very likely to be authentic and that only those items should be treated as unauthentic which are disproved by other evidence.

Mankad refers to the dates of various eras such as the Shalivahan, etc. and fixes the period of the beginning of the Vikram Samvat at 56 B.C. In the article "Kalki Avatar", he tries to prove the historicity of the *avatar*.

Mankad's "Northpole in the Rigveda" is an example of his penetrating insight. Lokmanya Tilak in his *Arctic Home in the Vedas* holds that the original abode of the Aryans was in the North Pole but Dr. A.C. Das refutes this, asserting that there is no reference whatsoever to the North Pole in the *Rigveda*. Mankad appreciates the research of these two learned persons. He agrees with Dr. Das that the Aryans originated from the 'Saptasindhavah' but examines Tilak's point of view and comes to the conclusion that the *Rigveda* does contain references to the North Pole. Mankad's fidelity to truth is conspicuous in this article.

The articles on literary criticism in this book can be divided into the following categories; (i) on Sanskrit literature, (ii) on various literary forms and trends, and (iii) reviews and prefaces.

His discussion on literary forms covers the 'Champu Katha', the one-act play, the novel, the short story, drama, etc. He accepts that some of the literary genres are of western origin but when he evaluates them he almost always does so by constant allusion to Indian literary genres. On the other hand Mankad uses his knowledge of modern western literary forms and experimental writing to assess specific works by Gujarati writers.

Mankad's literary criticism seems always to have a sure grasp of the idea behind a particular work and from this follows his evaluation with a close reference to the social life of the period. At times, however, this kind of examination involves so much reference data; the voice of the critic is not clearly heard and the way through the wood not much lighted. It is perhaps because of this also that Mankad's criticism does not seem very emphatic.

However, it ought to be said that a characteristic of Mankad's criticism is its wide range of reference. A work is examined through the discussion of many relevant subjects. His article on "Ideas Behind Literature" which covers the period between 1901 and 1940, is a case in point. This is an admirable attempt at examining literature in its cultural context.

Ramanlal Joshi

1965 Award

Kakasaheb (Dattatreya Balkrishna) Kalelkar

Jeevana Vyavastha

Navajivana Prakashan, Ahmedabad; 1963; 316 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"Kakasaheb (Dattatreya Balkrishna) Kalelkar (b. 1885) is a distinguished scholar, essayist and exponent of Gandhian thought. Graduating from the Fergusson College, Poona, Kakasaheb Kalelkar started his career as a teacher but was soon drawn into the revolutionary political activities of his day and wandered over the country in disguise as 'Sadhu Dattatreya' during which

period he also trekked on foot to the Himalayas from Kashmir to Nepal. Later he became a teacher at Santiniketan and worked for some time with Rabindranath Tagore until he came in 1915 under the spell of Mahatma Gandhi and became his lifelong associate and a votary of non-violence and national reconstruction. He followed the Mahatma to Sabarmati where he dedicated himself to the propagation of the Gandhian ideals of educational and social reconstruction, and was for sometime Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapith founded by the Mahatma. After Independence, he was nominated to the Rajya Sabha by the President of India and in 1953 was appointed Chairman of the Backward Classes Commission. He was awarded the title of Padma Bhushan in 1964, and in 1965, on the completion of his eightieth year, he was presented a commemoration volume by the President of India at a special ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

A versatile scholar, Kakasaheb Kalelkar knows many languages and has more than eighty published works to his credit. Though born a Maharashtrian he adopted Gujarati as his main literary medium and soon achieved a mastery of that language and a style of Gujarati prose which is the envy of many writers. His volume of Gujarati essays entitled *Jeevanaleela* has been translated in several Indian languages by the Sahitya Akademi.

The Award book, *Jeevana Vyavastha*, is the latest collection of his reflective essays on various aspects of society, cultural and religious, written over several years. For its maturity of thought and depth of understanding and for its exquisitely simple style, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature."

Kakasaheb Kalelkar is one of the most cherished names in Gujarati literature. Though a Maharashtrian by birth, he is said to be a 'Savai Gujarati', that is, a Gujarati *par excellence*. The present work also bears ample testimony to it.

He was a missionary of Indian civilization and culture. He was no escapist as one would be inclined to surmise because of his idealism. In fact, he always remained a lover, preacher and teacher of the noble life, the life of beauty and active poetry. Being a practical idealist, he always aimed at enriching the life of the people of India irrespective of caste and creed.

He may not have composed even a line of metrical poetry as such, but his writings breathe an emotional sweetness of real poetry. He may be standing at the foot of a hill or at the top of the Himalayas, but his practical vision and wisdom never leave him. He has been called reverentially as 'Loka-mata' (Mother of the people). Is it not significant of his noble mission in life?

In this book we come across a well known Sanskrit quotation two or three times, which defines the function of an ideal *acharya*, an *acharya* of life.

The book is divided into six parts: simple looking notes for personal reference, letters, lectures and appreciative articles are duly arranged in them.

The aim of life is joy–'life' and 'joy' are the keywords of all his thinking and writing activity. He was deeply influenced by the message of the *Gita* and the *Mahabharata*. A studied article entitled "Mahabharathon Asvad" (Pleasure of the *Mahabharata*) beautifully bears it out.

The richness of his experiences, his love and regard for Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhiji, and all that they stood for, his own extensive and intensive reading duly absorbed and enriched by his emotional and intellectual self, give his writings a philosophical touch which is his own.

Sunderji Betai

1967 Award

Prabodh Bechardas Pandit

Gujarati Bhashanun Dhwaniswaroop ane Dhwaniparivartan

Gujarati University, Ahmedabad; 1966; 308 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri Prabodh Bechardas Pandit (b. 1923) is a distinguished author and linguist. Born at Valabhi, Sri Pandit received his education first in Bombay and then obtained his degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the London University in 1949. He started his educational career as Reader in Linguistics at

the Gujarat University and is at present working as Professor and Head of the Department of Linguistics at the Delhi University.

A painstaking and devoted scholar of linguistics, Sri Pandit has done valuable research work in the field of historical and comparative method and phonological theory. He has contri-buted several erudite papers in various journals both in India and abroad and has to his credit a work on linguistics in Hindi also. He has held important assignments as a research fellow and as a visiting professor in linguistics both in India and abroad.

The Award book, *Gujarati Bhashanun Dhwaniswaroop ane Dhwaniparivartan*, is his latest study in the field of linguistic structure and phonological system of Gujarati, an area hitherto unexplored. For its fresh and original approach to the subject, for the refined and scientific methods used in the study and for the clarity and lucidity of expression it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature."

The book is of considerable significance in Gujarati language and Gujarati linguistics. We find in it scientific analysis and research on Gujarati never done before.

The book deals with the sound system of Gujarati in detail including the linguistic change which it underwent, and a detailed account of historical phonology, and dialectology.

In chapter one, the nature of language is discussed. While discussing the process of sound production in chapter two, he describes the organs of speech, points of articulation, different kinds of vocal cavities and classifies the sounds which are produced by human beings. In chapter three, he discusses how to establish the unit of sound, i.e. phoneme from all produced sounds. Chapter four deals with phonemes in Gujarati. He also gives his original view-point specially regarding the treatment of murmur vowels, aspirated consonants and nasals.

In the chapters five and six he discusses sound change and grammatical change. He compares Gujarati of the thirteenth and the twentieth century and thereby clarifies the process of linguistic change. How the comparative method is useful, even in the absence of the speaker of Old Gujarati is proved by him. The nature of

He may not have composed even a line of metrical poetry as such, but his writings breathe an emotional sweetness of real poetry. He may be standing at the foot of a hill or at the top of the Himalayas, but his practical vision and wisdom never leave him. He has been called reverentially as 'Loka-mata' (Mother of the people). Is it not significant of his noble mission in life?

In this book we come across a well known Sanskrit quotation two or three times, which defines the function of an ideal *acharya*, an *acharya* of life.

The book is divided into six parts: simple looking notes for personal reference, letters, lectures and appreciative articles are duly arranged in them.

The aim of life is joy–'life' and 'joy' are the keywords of all his thinking and writing activity. He was deeply influenced by the message of the *Gita* and the *Mahabharata*. A studied article entitled "Mahabharathon Asvad" (Pleasure of the *Mahabharata*) beautifully bears it out.

The richness of his experiences, his love and regard for Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhiji, and all that they stood for, his own extensive and intensive reading duly absorbed and enriched by his emotional and intellectual self, give his writings a philosophical touch which is his own.

Sunderji Betai

1967 Award

Prabodh Bechardas Pandit

Gujarati Bhashanun Dhwaniswaroop ane Dhwaniparivartan

Gujarati University, Ahmedabad; 1966; 308 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri Prabodh Bechardas Pandit (b. 1923) is a distinguished author and linguist. Born at Valabhi, Sri Pandit received his education first in Bombay and then obtained his degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the London University in 1949. He started his educational career as Reader in Linguistics at

the Gujarat University and is at present working as Professor and Head of the Department of Linguistics at the Delhi University.

A painstaking and devoted scholar of linguistics, Sri Pandit has done valuable research work in the field of historical and comparative method and phonological theory. He has contri-buted several erudite papers in various journals both in India and abroad and has to his credit a work on linguistics in Hindi also. He has held important assignments as a research fellow and as a visiting professor in linguistics both in India and abroad.

The Award book, *Gujarati Bhashanun Dhwaniswaroop ane Dhwaniparivartan*, is his latest study in the field of linguistic structure and phonological system of Gujarati, an area hitherto unexplored. For its fresh and original approach to the subject, for the refined and scientific methods used in the study and for the clarity and lucidity of expression it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature."

The book is of considerable significance in Gujarati language and Gujarati linguistics. We find in it scientific analysis and research on Gujarati never done before.

The book deals with the sound system of Gujarati in detail including the linguistic change which it underwent, and a detailed account of historical phonology, and dialectology.

In chapter one, the nature of language is discussed. While discussing the process of sound production in chapter two, he describes the organs of speech, points of articulation, different kinds of vocal cavities and classifies the sounds which are produced by human beings. In chapter three, he discusses how to establish the unit of sound, i.e. phoneme from all produced sounds. Chapter four deals with phonemes in Gujarati. He also gives his original view-point specially regarding the treatment of murmur vowels, aspirated consonants and nasals.

In the chapters five and six he discusses sound change and grammatical change. He compares Gujarati of the thirteenth and the twentieth century and thereby clarifies the process of linguistic change. How the comparative method is useful, even in the absence of the speaker of Old Gujarati is proved by him. The nature of

analogical change and how it differs from sound change are explained in chapter seven. Sound change is more important for a historical linguist as analytical change is not widespread, he states. Chapter eight deals with the historical phonology of Gujarati vowels. The period selected for this study is from Prakrit to Modern Gujarati. How the vowel system of final stage of Prakrit, i.e. Apabhramsha differs from the vowel system of Old Gujarati is discussed logically and extensively. He believes that since the traditional stages of language always indicate the literary stages, the linguist should take care to differentiate between these two. The impact of the change in the vowel system culminating into the change in grammatical system of this period is pointed out with ample examples. In the same way, how Old Gujarati period develops into Middle Gujarati and lately into Neo-Gujarati period is brought out.

The nature of described dialect is in chapter nine, while in chapter ten, he looks upon dialects from the historical perspective. He considers that at every stage one speech form is developed into many speech form as dialects. In course of time, each of these dialects is developed into an independent language which is later split into many speech forms. He offers the clear-cut chronological division of Middle-Indo-Aryan dialects, comparing the language of Ashokan inscriptions. The oldest division of Indo-Aryan language into three major groups–Northern, Central and Eastern, are noted down on the basis of their characteristic features. Each of these divisions is made clear on the basis of their distinct features.

Then he examines the central division. The whole area of Gujarati, Marwadi, Mewati, Malvi, Jaypuri and Bhili is separated as one group from central region, then by the chronological division, Gujarati got the status of independent language. Hardly 600 or 700 years ago it was separated from Rajasthani and Bhili.

Having established Gujarati as a language, he examines dialectal divisions of Gujarati language, from Ahmedabad to Saurashtra. The sub-divisions of are Halari, Sorathi, Gohilwadi, North Gujarati, South Gujarati, Central Gujarati, etc. Each division is marked by its distinct features. At the end he emphasises the importance of study and research of social dialects, viz. professional dialects, caste dialects, group dialects, etc.

Thus, this book is the outcome of the research carried out in his life. Its potential to open up new directions of research in Gujarati Linguistics is fully well established by this book.

Urmi G. Desai

1968 Award

Sundaram (Tribhuvandas P. Luhar)

Avalokana

R.R. Sheth and Company, Bombay; 1965; 545 pp.; Rs. 11.50

"Sri Sundaram (Sri Tribhuvandas P. Luhar) (b. 1908) was born at Mia Matar in the Broach distrct of Gujarat. Sri Sundaram spent his childhood in the surcharged atmosphere of national resurgence and struggle for Independence. He received his education at the Gujarati Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, from where he obtained the degree of Bhasha Visharad. He started writing poems in Gujarati at an early age and published his first collection of poems in 1933. Since then he has continued to write and has to his credit a number of collections of poems and short stories besides essays and literary criticism. The vitality and sincerity reflected in these writings have earned him an honoured place in the field of Gujarati letters.

For the last many years Sri Sundaram has followed the Yoga Sadhana of Sri Aurobindo in the Ashram at Pondicherry and also edits a Gujarati quarterly, *Dakshina*.

The Award book, *Avalokana*, is the collection of Sri Sundaram's literary reviews written over a long period. It contains a valuable study of a number of significant Gujarati poets besides some novelists and short story writers. For its critical acumen and deep perception, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature."

This volume is a collection of the critical writings of Sri Tribhuvandas Luhar, better known in Gujarat by his pen-name Sundaram. A gifted poet of high sensibility and innovative genius, Sundaram is endowed with a perceptive and critical mind and scholarship in an equal measure. The present volume which bears eloquent testimony

to his observation shows that the scholar and the critic in Sundaram have been active from the beginning of his literary career, simultaneously with the creative poet that he primarily is. Like a true aesthete, he says that his endeavour in literary criticism embodied in the studies, lectures, forewords and reviews comprising this volume, has been for him a pleasant journey in quest of the truth of beauty and the beauty of truth in literature. His studied appreciation and assessment of the poetry of Balvantrai Thakore, Ramnarain Pathak 'Shesh', 'Kalapi', Ramanlal Desai, 'Snehrashmi' and Meghani, and his forewords to and reviews of the collections of the poems of a number of junior contemporaries present him in the best of colours as a critic of poetry with a high aesthetic taste and standard and a well-balanced and sure judgement. His assessment of the Gujarati publications of the year 1941 and of prose literature of almost all types reflect the same qualities. He makes a thorough study of the book or author and never fails to notice and admire the talent and the artistic achievement of the writer, at the same time pointing out with a discerning eye the avoidable lapses of the writer that detract a little from the merits of his work. But he points them out without undue impatience or petulance. His general attitude to junior poets is not arrogant or patronising, but sympathetic and helpfully friendly, as that of a senior practising artist. On the whole, this volume which provides instructive and delightful reading not only for its contents but also for its chaste and facile prose interspersed by occasional playful lightness, read to with his earlier publication *Arvachin Kavita* establishes Sundaram as a reputed and trustworthy critic.

Anantrai Raval

1969 Award

Swami Anand

Kulkathao

Balagobinda Prakashan, Ahmedabad; 1966; 240 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Swami Anand (b. 1887), social worker and distinguished author, was born in Saurashtra and brought up in Bombay among Deccani Brahmins. He was kidnapped at the age of ten by

a wandering *sadhu* and studied intermittently at schools and under *sadhus* of the Ramkrishna Mission. He came in contact with Lokmanya Tilak in early life and was among the earliest associates of Gandhiji, and was jailed several times. He also worked with Sardar Patel during the No-Tax Bardoli Campaign, and later led a team of relief workers during the Bihar Earthquake. One of the founders of Kasturba National Memorial Trust, he has run Gandhi Ashram, Thana, near Bombay, and worked among Adivasis, and Frontier refugees near Hardwar and Dehra Dun after Partition.

The Award book, *Kulkathao,* first published in 1966, is a collection of full-length portraits of the early settlers in Bombay, originally hailing from the Cutch. For its lucid and charming prose style and for the authentic portrayal of a significant period in the life of the great city, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature.

A worthy disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Anand, while conveying to the Sahitya Akademi his thankful appreciation of the Award has regretted his inability to participate in the function or to accept the cash award or any symbol of honour, for he is precluded by his vow of renunciation from accepting any pecuniary benefit or wordly honour for any service he may have rendered to the community. The Sahitya Akademi looks upon this noble gesture as all the more worthy of honour."

Swami Anand was eminently fit to write these family stories, as from his early childhood he had known the family of the famous industrialist Morarji Gokuldas, and through them many other prominent Bhatia families of the time. The Bhatias, along with Parsis, Khojas, Israelis, Kapoles and Maharashtrians were responsible for building up the rich multi-dimensional life of Bombay.

The author had watched the growth of these families and their benevolent influences. Most of them, starting from scratch, had acquired millions, but they remained socially useful men and women of integrity, insight and character. Swami Anand, a Gandhian worker, a *sadhu*, a thinker and a writer of great merit, wrote this charming book delineating the lives of families and people he knew and admired.

The book contains sketches and pen-pictures of the Jivraj Balus, Tejpals, Mulji Jethas, the Khataus, Thackersays and the Vasanjis. They provide an interesting as well as heart-warming account of these families and portrays a vivid picture of Bombay of bygone days.

The language employed by him is vivid and powerful. His outlook is catholic; he writes with affection and understanding. He extols their virtues and there are no pretensions to patronage.

The humour, the nuances of narrative, the unorthodox use of language, and the sympathetic eye which has a measure of what it is looking on–all the qualities that have endeared Swami Anand to his readers, are there in this small volume.

Gulabdas Broker

1970 Award

Nagindas Parekh

Abhinavano Rasavichar

B.S. Shahni Company, Ahmedabad; 1969; 343 pp.; Rs. 12.00

"Sri Nagindas Parekh (b. 1903) is a distinguished author and critic in Gujarati. Born at Bulsar Sri Parekh received his higher education at Gujarat Vidyapith from where he graduated in 1925. After studying at Vishva Bharati for a while he became a teacher at Gujarati Vidyapith where he continued till 1914. Inspired by Gandhian ideals he took active part in the national struggle for freedom and courted arrest thrice. A devoted scholar and an ardent public worker Sri Parekh was editor of a number of magazines of Gujarat.

After the attainment of freedom, Sri Parekh returned to the field of education and has worked as a professor at H.K. Arts College from 1955 till his retirement in 1970. He has actively participated in the working of several literary associations and has served on a number of expert committees. One of the leading critics of his language today, he has always upheld the highest principles of literary evaluation and has made substantial contribution in reconciling the traditional values with modern sensibility.

> The Award book, *Abhinavano Rasavichar* (*ane Bija Lekho*), is a collection of Sri Parekh's critical essays written over a long period. In these essays Sri Parekh has examined the theory of Indian poetics in a new light and has arrived at conclusions which are at once convincing and original. For its profundity of erudition, soundness of judgement and its flowing prose the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature."

This book is a collection of eight essays on Sanskrit poetics. Its author Nagindas Parekh is known to Gujarati reading public as a translator of some renowned Bengali works into Gujarati.

In this collection, we find Nagindas Parekh translating and commenting on Sanskrit works, with the help of other reliable English and Hindi translations. He has also consulted several other Sanskrit scholars before bringing out this book.

"Abhinavano Rasavichar" is the main eassay in this collection. In this essay, the author has explained in full Abhinavagupta's views on 'Rasa' expressed in Abhinava's commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra*. The basic aphorism on which this commentary is based is *Tatra Vibhavanubhavavyabhicharisamyogadrasanispattin*. Bharata has not explained what he means by *Samyoga* or *Vibhava*, *Anubhava* and *Vyabhichari* and what is *Rasanispatti* but later *Acharyas* gave detailed explanations. Abhinava incorporates all such views in his commentary.

Nagindas Parekh has obliged students of Gujarat by making such difficult and important topics of Sanskrit poetics easily accessible. There is no other authentic work in Gujarati which can be compared with this work of Parekh. Clarity and accuracy are chiefly noteworthy throughout this scholarly work.

The other essays in it include "Rasabhasa, its Concept and Place in Poetics", "Rasabhasa, Some Discussions", "Vakrokti or Kuntaka's Concept of Poetry", "Ramaniyata Jagannatha's Concept of Poetry", "Auchityavichara", "Meaning in Poetry" and "Akhyana".

This collection of essays gained a lot by including in it a scholarly preface by Rasiklal Parikh, a prominent Gujarat scholar of Sanskrit.

Pinakin N.

1971 Award

Chandravadan C. Mehta

Natya Gathariyan

Gandiv Sahitya Mandir, Surat; 1970; 271 pp.; Rs. 8.50

"Sri Chandravadan C. Mehta (b. 1901) is a distinguished author and playwright in Gujarati. Born at Surat and educated at Elphinston College, Bombay, he joined the Bardoli Satyagraha movement of Mahatma Gandhi in 1928, and edited his journal *Navjivan*. He was with the All India Radio from 1938 to 1954. At present he is a visiting Professor of Drama at the M.S. University, Baroda.

Sri Mehta has more than 30 publications to his credit, including poetry, novels, autobiography and translations, besides plays which is his forte. He has travelled widely and has represented India in many conferences abroad. He received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for play-writing this year. The President of India has conferred upon him the title of Padmashri in 1967.

The Award book, *Natya Gathariyan*, is an intimate study of the western drama and theatre presented in the form of a travelogue. For its comprehensive vision and picturesque language, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature."

An important work by 'C.C.' (as he is popularly known) not only in Gujarati but Indian literature, *Natya Gathariyan* is one of his ten (unplanned) parts of autobiography. It created a stir in the Gujarati literary scene when he started serialising it in the prestigious monthly magazine *Kumar* in the early fifties. Another notable autobiography that comes to mind is Gandhiji's *Satyana Prayogo* (Experiments with Truth): for candidness, pen-pictures, reflecting history/culture/social interplay,–simplicity, 'characteristic prose'. And *Natya Gathariyan* also for its style, 'C.C.' 'talks', he does not 'write'. He is a broadcaster, after all. More than a playwright.

'Gathariyan' means travel-bags. Taking a clue from Meera's song "Bandh Gathariyan mein to chali", he titled the first two parts of

the serial as 'Bandh Gathariyan'. The present work is thus called *Natya Gathariyan*—a record of his globe-trotting theatre-visits from East to West, also as a member of the International Theatre Jury at Nancy. It recounts his visits to the theatres of various countries, meetings with theatre experts and workers (Piscator, Helen Weigal, Sala Kru, Longhauf, Tatyana Sovesky, etc.), discussions on vital theatre issues, keeping in mind the relevance of each to the theatre-scene back home. This 'theatre-travelogue' thus becomes not only a record of a journey, but also a useful document to the theatre-lovers.

One only feels a little sad when realises that this lucidly written story of world theatre is neither properly evaluated as a genre in its own right by Gujarati critics, nor had it a noticeable impact on the theatre activity in the region. The theatre scene at home just remained unaffected even by a work of such an in-depth inquiry. It is not on the recommended reading material for the students of two University drama department in Gujarat which he himself had launched. Actually one would like to recommend it to all the theatre-workers of the country.

Being an autobiography, *Natya Gathariyan* is subjective and many of the writers' views also must be taken as such. His evaluation of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht, for example, could be debated. Whatever his predispositions, Brecht stands towering over the world theatre scene in the second half of this century. Moreover, putting Brecht and the Russian actor/director, Stanislavsky on two opposite poles in theatrical approach is also being unjust to both. The controversy on this misconceived issue was resolved long back even in German and Russian theatres.

Hasmukh Baradi

1973 Award

Umashankar Joshi

Kavini Shraddha

Vora and Company, Ahmedabad; 1972; viii+244; Rs. 7.00

"Sri Umashankar Joshi (b. 1911) was born in the district of Sabarkantha in Gujarat and educated at Ahmedabad and Bombay,

and later he joined the teaching profession. He actively participated in the national freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi and courted imprisonment twice. One of the founder members of the Sahitya Akademi and till recently a member of its Executive Board, he has been closely associated with a number of literary institutions and has travelled widely abroad as a member of several cultural delegations. He was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University in 1966 and was nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1970. He edits the Gujarati monthly *Sanskriti* since 1947 and has a large number of books to his credit which include poetry, literary criticism, one-act plays, short stories and essays, besides a novel. His collection of poems *Nisheeth* was given the Bharatiya Jnanpith Award in 1967.

The Award book, *Kavini Shraddha*, is the latest collection of his writings in the field of literary criticism. For its deep insight into the creative process and its masterly interpretation, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature."

Ever since he published his first poem *Vishvashanti* in 1931, Umashankar's has been a leading voice in Gujarati literature. *Kavini Shraddha*, contains 17 articles on literary criticism. In some of these articles, the author discusses works of all time greats like Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Robert Frost. In others, he critically examines works of some Gujarati litterateurs such as the medieval poets Akho, Premanand and the. modern authors such as Balvantrai Thakore, Sundaram, Jayanti Dalal, Radheshyam Sharma, etc. Texts of two major speeches delivered by the author have also been included in this collection. These are the presidential address delivered at the 1968 Session of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad and the speech delivered while accepting the Bharatiya Jnanpith Award in 1968.

The presidential address is devoted to a discussion on the vexed question of a poet's faith. (It is this piece that has given title to the collection, *Kavini Shraddha*, Poet's Faith). The main contention of the author is that a poet's faith in (or commitment to) his words is what matters, and not his faith (or lack of it) in God, religion or any social or political system or ideology. He thus advocates for the supreme position of poetic merit over all other considerations of 'isms' or ideologies. It is not only in this first piece, but all throughout the book, that Umashankar concentrates his attention on identifying,

critically examining, appreciating, and evaluating the worth and excellence of the poet's word.

Kavini Shraddha is not only a major work of its author, but it is also being considered a landmark in Gujarati literature.

Deepak B. Mehta

1974 Award

Anantrai M. Raval

Tartamya

Gurjara Grantharatna Karyalaya, Ahmedabad; 1971; viii+264 pp.; Rs. 5.50

> "Sri Anantrai M. Raval, distinguished Gujarati literary critic, was born in 1912. He did his M.A. in Gujarati and English from the University of Bombay. At present Professor and Head of the Department of Gujarati, School of Languages, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, he is a member of the General Council and the Gujarati Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi. He has been an active writer for the last forty years and has forty publications to his credit, including a history of Medieval Gujarati Literature and nine collections of essays in literay criticism.
>
> *Tartamya* is considered an outstanding contribution to Gujarati literary criticism for its scholarship and balanced viewpoint."

Anantrai M. Raval has, over the years, established himself as a serious scholar, sound critic and sympathetic evaluator of Gujarati literature. *Tartamya*, his eighth collection of articles on literary criticism, consists of eighteen pieces, most of them originally written as prefaces to the works of leading Gujarati authors such as Nanalal, Dhumketu, Pannalal Patel, Ketan Munshi, Digish Mehta, Pinakin Dave, etc. Articles on Gandhiji, Balvantrai Thakore, Chunilal Madia, and some others are also included. Raval's presidential address delivered at the 24th Session of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, too, has been included in this collection.

The fact that most of the pieces included in this collection were originally written as prefaces, has to some extent, imposed certain limitations on the author. Firstly, here, there is hardly any scope for the type of exhaustive study which is normally the forte of Raval's critical writings. Secondly, it is possible that the author may have chosen not to be absolutely frank in his assessment of the works discussed. And finally, the collection appears to be somewhat lacking in coherency and consistency of ideas and style.

In spite of these limitations, *Tartamya* displays glimpses of the author's refined sensibility, critical insight, sound evaluative judgement and his thorough familiarity with the creative and critical traditions of both the West and the East. His articles on Balvantraj Thakore and Chunilal Madia deserve special mention in this regard.

Tartamya, the title, suggests that the author's main concern here is the identification, and evaluation of the better (*tara*) and the best (*tama*). In some of the articles he has been able to do this with considerable success.

Deepak B. Mehta

1975 Award

Manubhai Pancholi 'Darshak'

Socrates

Sarvodaya Sahakari Prakashana Sangh, Ambala; 1974; 570 pp.; Rs. 26.00

"Sri Manubhai Pancholi 'Darshak', distinguished Gujarati novelist, was born in 1914 in Panchasia, a village in Gujarat. He left his studies in the ninth standard to participate in the Salt Movement and was jailed thrice between 1932 and 1942. He has been active in education and politics for years and is a former Minister for Education to the Government of Gujarat. He takes a keen interest in village-uplift, rural education, and history. He was decorated with the Ranjitrai Gold Medal, the highest literary award in Gujarati. Sri Pancholi has so far published nearly 30 books which include novels, plays, and treatises on Gandhism, Socialism, and Basic Education.

> *Socrates* is considered an outstanding contribution to Gujarati literature for its admirable characterisation, portrayal of intellectual conflicts, and its healthy and constructive approach to life."

Darshak believes that contemporary incidents have nothing to stimulate him into creative writing, though it is true that he knows more than any other Gujarati writer about the contemporary life. He lives in a rural society, and is in direct touch with the masses, but he has left untouched this asset and has gone in the depth of history to tell about the present human situation. In his novel, *Socrates*, Darshak turns to ancient Greece in order to gauge the inconsistencies which trouble us today in our search for the democratic ideal. He aims, it would appear, at tracing Gandhism back to its source releasing once again its healing waters.

Socrates as a historical novel depicts bygone ages of some distant alien land. It gives vivid pictures of Greece of fourth and fifth centuries B.C. Darshak himself has said: "My purpose here is to recreate Socrates in flesh and blood as a foil to the politically mutilated society of present times." Dr. Umashankar Joshi observes: "Only a person like Darshak, who has claimed the domicile of old Greece can create such a work."

Socrates is impressive in characterization and narration and is successful as a novel of ideas.

Raghuveer Chaudhari

1976 Award

N.K. Pandya 'Ushanas'

Aswattha

Vora and Company, Ahmedabad; 1975; 123 pp.; Rs. 8.50

> "Sri N. K. Pandya 'Ushanas', distinguished Gujarati poet and critic, was born in 1920. After obtaining his Master's degree in Gujarati and Sanskrit from Bombay University, Sri 'Ushanas' taught Gujarati for twenty nine years. Recipient of the Narmad Gold Medal, the Mahakavi Nanalal Prize and other literary awards, he has so far published 10 collections of poems and

3 books of literary criticism. Many of his poems have been translated into various Indian and foreign languages.

Aswattha is considered an outstanding contribution to Gujarati literature for its wide range of insight and feeling, originality of conception, superb craftsmanship and the blending of tradition with experiment."

The title of the collection *Aswattha* means a pious pipal tree. The title is suggestive. 'Aswattha' mythically symbolises the ancient Upanishadic world, the nature, the beautiful earth, and the leaves of grass–are woven into the melodious universe of the words. The collection contains 125 poems, songs and some 'haikus'. The poet has depicted nature in its intense form. He has painted nature in the tone of impressionistic painting. He is a poet of drunken consciousness. He has drunk to the fullest in its primitive experiences. All the emotional overtones, the colours, shades and ecstasies are manifested in his poetry. He has painted the dawn dancing with dewdrops, morning glory, chirping of birds, fascinating sunshine, twilight of flowers, all the six seasons adorned with branches full of fragrance and flowers in vivid colours with emotions. He has manifested this world of eternal beauty without historical perspective directly through the medium of tree, the wood, the mountain, the earth and the universe. His world of gaiety is beyond time and history. His is the nameless universe of infinity.

If nature, earth and universe are the circumference of his poetry, joy and agony of love and separation are the centre of his poetry. Yes, the poet loves somebody, yes, there are amorous tales of love and separation, but gradually this takes the form of the earth and infinity. Since the beginning of his poetic journey, he has intensely depicted the agony of separation. He is struggling with the newest phrases and experiments with the words. He screams at the crack and nothingness in love, even in his songs full of sweetness and melody; he says, "beyond the mountains, in a small village pond, heavily is pouring the rain, the eyes cannot wink, but they dripdrop the tears on the plastered earth floor." He still longs for those moments, those spring nights, rainy canvases and that formless eternity.

Throughout the collection he has struggled with the walls of language and has gained the enchanting charm of poetry. He has given new poetic dimensions to the languages.

Yashvant Trivedi

1977 Award

Raghuveer Chaudhari

Uparvas Kathatrayi

R.R. Seth and Company, Bombay; 1975; Vol. I, 472 pp., Rs. 21.75; Vol. II, 454 pp., Rs. 22.50; Vol. III, 415 pp., Rs. 19.75

> "Sri Raghuveer Chaudhari, distinguished Gujrati novelist, was born in 1938 at the Bapupura village of Mehsana district, Gujarat. He has a Master's degree in Hindi-Sanskrit and is teaching Hindi in Gujarat University. He served as the Secretary, Gujarat Saratchandra Centenary Committee last year and is at present Honoray Secretary to the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad. Besides novels, he has written short-stories, plays, poems and literary criticism. Sri Chaudhari has translated extensively from Gujarati into Hindi and vice-versa. He is the recipient of six literary awards and a medal.
>
> *Uparvas Kathatrayi* is considered an outstanding contribution to Gujarati literature for its authentic depiction of the vicissitudes of rural life, firm grip over the narrative and characters, brilliant use of the local dialect and firm control over form and technique."

Raghuveer Chaudhari's *Uparvas Kathatrayi*–a trilogy, falls into the tradition of longish, pastoral novel-writing. Conceived with utmost sincerity, the trilogy becomes instrumental in rendering into fiction, the writer's first-hand experiences of life. Though apparently an autobiography of the writer's native land, a few strains of the writer's own autobiography seem to have entered the story in an obscure way.

Almost with documentary precision the writer narrates the events occurring in a definite timespan, which is divided into three parts : Independence 1948–1952 (*Uparvas*), 1952–1960 (*Sahavas*), and 1960–1972 (*Antarvas*).

The trilogy keeps in focus the village Sompura and the family of Pithu Bhagat, a farmer. Little hamlets like Timba, Badri, Dhekhalia, and Gokaliyun are also covered in the story. Some elements of urban life-style also enter the story in consequence of Lavji's stay at Ahmedabad.

The writer's unyielding faith in truth, humanity, and love lifts the narrative from escapism from helpless human predicament. We find a balanced, realistic and penetrating rendering of a community life related to co-operative activities, elections and the good and evil contained in religious, social, political and educational institutions. It also mirrors the essential conflict against corruption and evil.

The trilogy presents a variety of characters: class characters like Pithu Bhagat and Hirubhai on the one hand, and Narsang, Devji, Lavji, Ramanji, Ranchod, Kassan Mukhi and Ghemer on the other. Fulji, Dhamlo and Takhat invite special attention as well-rounded characters. The trilogy portrays a profound picture of the post-Independence era through a wide range of male-female characters.

The writer, like a cameraman, brings into focus the emotions of these characters, and gives snapshots of their family and love-life. He applies the skills of satire and humour in a restrained and understanding manner.

The landscape of northern Gujarat and the Chaudhri community form the core of this trilogy. The dialect of that region is ably employed. The story combines social realism with linguistic realism to highlight the inner human reality.

The trilogy depicts man's journey from the outward to the inward life. While it recognizes co-existence (*Sahavas*) of human beings, it ultimately highlights the urge of inner life (*Antarvas*) in an artistic manner.

Chandrakant Sheth

1978 Award

Harindra Dave

Hayati

Chimanlal Literary Trust, Bombay; 1977; 224 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Harindra Dave, distinguished Gujarati poet, novelist and critic, was born in 1930. He has a Master's degree in Gujarati

and English Literature from the University of Bombay and has been a journalist for the last 28 years. He now edits *Janashakti*, a Gujarati daily from Bombay. Sri Dave, who has published six collections of poems, five novels and five volumes of literary criticism, is also a successful playwright and translator. His writings have won a number of awards and he is a member of several academic and learned institutions.

Hayati is considered an outstanding contribution to Gujarati literature for its inimitable personal touch, tenderness of feeling, an encompassing diction and experiments in form and metre."

Harindra's entry in Gujarati poetry was at a period when there was a climate of Rajendra Shah and Niranjan Bhagat's poetry. In the beginning as it happens more or less in one way or the other with any new emerging poet, it also happened with Harindra. To an extent his pen was hypnotized by the lyrics of Rajendra and Niranjan but in the course of time, he found his own voice. Harindra's poetry has a relation with tradition, but he is not traditional. It has a relationship with modernism but not with illusive contemporary modernism. His lyrical songs are to be enjoyed in the deeper solitude of the mind. One can find a depth of emotions in his poetry, but not various dimensions of the emotions. His poetry is romantic by temperament, even though he tries to write objective poems, he is much more successful in his subjective poems. He has written songs, ghazals, sonnets and prose poems. Love is the centre of his poetry and in the beginning one can find an ecstacy in his love-poems. But at a later stage there is nothing but pessimism in his love-poetry. His poems are sensuous and imbibed with an inner sensibility which one rarely finds. His poems are delicacy personified. One can say that some of his very rare love-poems are written in a language of flesh and roses. Some of his poems are bifocal. In love, he finds spiritualism and in spiritualism he finds love. The poet is also preoccupied with the theme of death.

His lyrics are too difficult to be translated because by temperament they are music-based and music-bound. This music is born from emotion and devotion, and not from a mere jugglery of words.

A journalist, Harindra cannot insulate himself from contemporary events or the social and political life around him. In one of his ghazals, he says, "I feel as if this civilization is dead, and this world is nothing but the meeting of the mournings."

His lyrics of Radha and Krishna are very significant. After Dayaram and Priyakant Maniar, he is one of the poets who has written lilting lyrics on Radha and Krishna. He has said that Krishna is his surrealist experience.

Adil Mansoori is a ghazalkar who has broken new grounds in writing ghazals, but Harindra did it in a very silent way. He has written long poems but has failed in achieving the structural beauty. His is a poetry of singing pictures. Remaining away from the pedantic language of the critics, I would prefer to say that his poetry is a subtle carving of dew on a flower. In the language of his poetry one can find the harmony of Saurashtry, Hindi and Urdu words.

Suresh Dalal

HINDI

1955 Award

Makhanlal Chaturvedi

Himtarangini

Bharthi Bandara, Prayag; 1949; xii+91 pp.

Himtarangini is Makhanlal Chaturvedi's second poetic collection. The poems in this volume are about meditation and surrender. These poems bear testimony to the poet's deep Vaishnav faith. On one hand, the poet describes his closeness to the worshipped one as the "pride of existence", "the boon of spring" and a "struggle against decay." On the other, the aloofness from the same worshipful gives such agony that its intensity becomes the glitter of the stars in the sky and encompasses the space between the sky and the earth.

Another aspect of this Vaishnav faith is that the poet as soldier in the freedom struggle (while in prison) finds the presence of Lord Krishna everywhere in the prison. Krishna was born in jail. So the prison of the poet becomes one with that of the Lord:

In the stone walls
And in the iron bars
And in the various bodies around
Wherever I might see
I see you and you alone.

So, these poems are at once the poems of worship and friendship for the worshipped one.

The third form of the poet's Vaishnav faith is manifest in the deity rousing the miserable and the downtrodden. All these aspects of the Vaishnav faith combined, represent the poet's o

Himtarangini is also notable for some sublime poems on the untimely death of his wife. These love poems in her memory touch great heights of devotion and movingly express the poet's grief.

I crave the boon that you were around
A home I want in this deserted ground.

The poems of *Himtarangini* have played a historic role in the background of Chhayavad. As Dr. Shiv Prasad Singh says,"The lyrics in this collection are an invaluable achievement of Chhayavadi creative process. In these poems, the poet's personal agony assumes universal proportions....This agony and its mystery is beyond any other poet of Chhayavad."

A few poems in the collection pertain to Nature. The work is notable for the freshness of language.

Srikant Joshi

1956 Award

Vasudevasaran Agrawala

Padmavat Sanjivani Vyakhya

Sahitya Sadan, Jhansi; 1955; 70+78 pp.

of the same work he has explained some of his critical observations in detail. Vasudevasaran Agrawala has also discussed the time, life and tradition of the great Sufi poet. Above all, he has underlined the historical sensibility, cultural awareness and art-references working behind the vocabulary of this rich epic poem. Thus *Padmavat Sanjivani Vyakhya* excels as an attempt towards textual criticism in a cultural-historical linguistic perspective. Scholars may differ about certain findings of Vasudevasaran Agrawala but they will appreciate this work for a wider range of literary criticism.

Parmanand Srivastava

1957 Award

Acharya Narendra Dev

Bauddha-Dharma-Darshan

Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, Patna; 1956; 70+782 pp.; Rs. 15.0.0

> "This is the last published work of the late Acharya Narendra Dev, distinguished scholar, educationist and Socialist leader. Born in 1880 in Sitapur (Uttar Pradesh), Acharya Narendra Dev combined in himself the best virtues of the old and new generation. A valiant fighter for India's freedom and one of the founders of the Socialist Party of India, he was a scholar, writer and educationist of rare distinction. He founded the Kasi Vidya Peeth and was Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow and Banaras Universities and a Member of Parliament. *Bauddha-Dharma-Darshan* is a masterly survey of the development of Buddhist metaphysics and logic."

Running into twenty five chapters in five sections, *Bauddha-Dharma-Darshan* sheds light on almost all aspects of Buddhism. In the first chapter of section I, the author presents authentic material for a historical study of the origin and growth of Buddhism. It includes a detailed account of the life of Gautam, the Buddha. The discussion of the evolution of the 'nikayas' and the spiritual practices in respect

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Vasudevasaran Agrawala's significant work *Padmavat Sanjivani Vyakhya* makes use of the possibilities of philosophical and cultural interpretation of a literary work.

The preface of the book is a revealing example of appreciative and scholastic criticism. After Ramachandra Shukla, Vasudevasaran Agrawala alone has discussed the poetic meaning, philosophical and cultural motives and images in *Padmavat* with such scholarship and insight. While explaining the linguistic approach towards textual criticism, Agrawala has tried to evaluate Avadhi language in a living historical tradition. Discussing the tradition of the epic-form, significance of a love-story in the Sufi pattern, Jayasi's philosophical vision, his attachment to the sensibility of the masses, Agrawala poses the problem of the validity of an old text like *Padmavat*. Comparing several texts

of the same work he has explained some of his critical observations in detail. Vasudevaśaran Agrawala has also discussed the time, life and tradition of the great Sufi poet. Above all, he has underlined the historical sensibility, cultural awareness and art-references working behind the vocabulary of this rich epic poem. Thus *Padmavat Sanjivani Vyakhya* excels as an attempt towards textual criticism in a cultural-historical linguistic perspective. Scholars may differ about certain findings of Vasudevasaran Agrawala but they will appreciate this work for a wider range of literary criticism.

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of Sthaviravada are also included in Section I. In the five chapters of section II, we find detailed discussions on the origin and growth of the Mahayana sect and its philosophy, on the evolution of its literature and the spiritual performances linked therewith. Section III comprises a detailed study of the general principles of Buddhist Philosophy. Section IV introduces the four *prasthana* of Buddhism on the basis of authentic Buddhist works and makes a comparative study of other religions *vis-a-vis* Buddhism.

The work is based on intensive as well as extensive study of source books in Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit. The preface-writer M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj has unhesitatingly assented that a profound, authentic and penetrating study on Buddhist religon and philosophy which may stand a comparison with the work under review is not available in any of the Indian languages.

A special feature of the present work is a comparative and contrastive study of the Indian Vedic Religion and Buddhism in an appropriate context. And the author has been quite dispassionate and impartial in this comparison. In a comparison of theistic philosophies with Buddhism, likewise, the author heralds a tradition of philosophical analysis. Acharya fills another important gap when he introduces the pioneering masters of the Buddhism System about whom we find no relevant mention except in Pali literature.

While introducing Buddhist literature, the author dwells on Buddhist-hybridized Sanskrit. For the first time, we find an elaborate description of Lalivistar of the literature of Aswaghosha of the Avadan literature, of Mahayana Sutre, etc. In the Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy, the author takes up all relevant theories of causation for analytical study. A profound and authoritative discussion on the nature of 'Nirvana' also finds a place.

In brief, the present volume is unparalleled if one seeks to know the quintessence of Buddhist religion and philosophy from an authentic source. M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj's assessment of each chapter of the book in his introduction proves that prior to Acharya no scholar had ever ventured to write on a profound subject as this in such a thorough and elaborate manner. It is, undoubtedly, a great achievement, a fragrant offering to the Goddess of learning.

V. Snatak

1958 Award

Rahul Sankrityayan

Madhya-Asia Ka Itihas

Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, Patna; 1956; Vol. I,18+530 pp.; 1957; Vol. II, 18+658 pp.

"Sri Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan (b. 1893 in Pandha, District Azamgarh, U.P.) is a distinguished linguist, traveller, Tibetologist, and author of more than 200 books."

Madhya-Asia Ka Itihas is monumental work consisting of interdisciplinary research in pre-history, archaeology, philology, cultural anthropology, and political and economic history of a hitherto unexplored region, the like of which is neither available in English nor in any other Indian language. Most of the material has been drawn from primary Russian sources. In the introduction Rahul writes: "I undertook this arduous task as a challenge as no such history of Central Asia was available. Moreover, this history is intimately connected with the history of India. I collected major documentation for this work during my stay in Soviet Russia, from 1945 to 1947.

Dedicated to the fond memory of the great historian Kashiprasad Jaiswal, this work has numerous maps, numismatic plates, bibliographies of articles, charts of ruling dynasties, an elaborate Russian-Sanskrit-Persian lexicon and three lists of source-books. Its canvas is cast very wide–starting from first millenia B.C., it covers the account of this part of the world till 1927. Though based on material available up to 1947, the plan of the volumes and its sub-chapters is very scientific. Chronologically the first volume has eight chapters: "Prehistoric Man", "Palaeolithic Age", "Northern Region (600-720)", "South Region (550-673)", "Northern Region (766-940)", "Southern Region (673-900)", "Northern Region (940-1212)" and "Southern Region (892-1229)". The second volume has five chapters: "Northern Region (1200-1550)", "Southern Region (1224-1743)", "Northern Region (1590-1801)", "Southern Region (1747-1917)", "Bolshevik Revolution (1917-1929)."

"The volumes cover a colossal range of time, of corroded centuries and milleniums. They present to our mind's eyes a panorama of ethnic units, of surging masses of moving men, of settlements succeeding settlements, of civilizations rising and falling, of blended humanity"–wrote Bhagavat Saran Upadhaya in a review of this work. In the Carpathian and Caucacius, the Urals and the Pamirs and the Thienshan valleys are invaded, settled and deserted by the Semites and Aryans, the Medes and Iranians, the Scythians and Yuehchis, the Nephthelites and Turks, the Mongols and the Chinese. What a remarkable story re-told by a giant intellectual of our times!

Prabhakar Machwe

1959 Award

Ramdhari Sinha Dinkar

Samskriti ke Char Adhyay

Rajpal and Sons, Delhi; 1956; 690 pp.; Rs. 15.0.0

> "Sri Ramdhari Sinha Dinkar (b. 1908 at village Simaria, Dist. Monghyr, Bihar) is a poet and essayist and has authored of about 30 books in Hindi. Was awarded Padmabhushan in 1959. Received twice the Dwivedi Gold Medal of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Kashi. Was also awarded prizes by the Government of India, the Bihar Rashtra Bhasha Parishad and the Sahityakar Samsad, Allahabad, for distinguished work in poetry. Member of Rajya Sabha since 1952."

Samskriti ke Char Adhyay is a detailed and analytical account of India's cultural development through the ages against a historical backdrop.

Dinkar divides the history of Indian culture into four major revolutions, the first of the revolutions took place when the Aryans came to India or when they came into contact with the Non-Aryan races. The first section discusses in detail, the organisation of the Indian people, the arrival of the Dravidian race and the various probabilities about the Negroes. Chapter II contains the assessment

of denominations Dravidian and Aryan, their origins, the geographical details of the war between 'dev' and 'asurs', the period of Rigveda's composition, the evolution of script and the art of writing and an introduction of the 'Kirat' and 'Parsi' races. It also discusses the Vedic culture, the Aryan-Dravidian relationship, the emergence of caste system, Shaivism, Kartikeya and Ganesh, Vaishnavism, the antiquity of the names Radha and Krishna, the antiquity of the 'Ramakatha', the history of the name Hindu, an account of the other races crossing into India and the assimilative power of the Hindu Culture.

Section II gives a brief survey of the Vedic literature and goes on to present a detailed account of Jain and Buddhist beliefs.

The author also makes an effort to compare and contrast the views of Gautam Buddha and Confucius. Investigating the Shakta influences on Buddhist practices, he also brings all such spiritual practices as established themselves in later ages within his purview.

Section III discusses Hindu Culture and Islam. The Indians got to know the teachings of the Quran, the Islamic scripture and a process of conversion commenced. Along with the Vedanta, the Indian's were appraised with Tasavuuf or Islamic mysticism and the efforts of contemporary poets to bring the two cultures together were indeed commendable.

The author has also studied the influence of Islam on Hinduism. Tracing the influence of Islam on Indian art and craft, the author dwells on the various styles that developed during the Moghul rule. In this context, he speaks of the Moghul style, the Rajasthani style, the Pahari style, the influences on architecture and the differences in the Rajput and Moghul styles. The interaction of languages and literatures is also discussed.

Section IV dwells on the influences exercised by European contact on Indian Culture. The preface to the book has been written by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He defines 'Culture' and in this context throws light on Dinkar's classification. The preface is a well thought out piece of scholarly profundity. The work aspires to delineate and discuss in depth the various stages of our cultural evolution and though the author prefers to call it a literary work, it essentially is a work entailing historical research.

V. Snatak

1960 Award

Sumitranandan Pant

Kala aur Burha Chand

Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi; 1950; 206 pp.; Rs. 6.00

> "Sri Sumitranandan Pant (b. 1900) is an eminent Hindi poet and one of the leaders of the Chhayavad school of Hindi poetry. *Kala aur Burha Chand*, which literally means 'The Art and the Old Moon', is a collections of Pant's latest poems in which the poet has boldly experimented with new modes of expression and has given voice to a new spirit of hope and transformation. Mainly concerned with man's spiritual quest and his moral and aesthetic aspirations, these poems seek to convey glimpses of a beyond which is always there and yet not here. The suggestive profundity of the poems as well as their richness of imagery make it a remarkable work."

Kala aur Burha Chand consists of all the poems composed by him in 1958. Pant has adopted an entirely new form and diction, hitherto unknown to his poetry. He has named it 'Rashmipadi Kavya' or 'Poetry of Beaming Words'. Going through this collection, the reader gets a distinct picture of the uncommon ground of social life, surcharged with some kind of mysticism and Upanishadic spirit. Pant has opted here to adopt the language of intuitive expression and he is frank enough to confess, "I lay down the jingling girdle of metre." He aims at the height of serenity reflected in the 'Superman' of Aurobindo.

Although, Pant in this collection appears like a thinker, possessed by a philosophic mood, he has hardly been able to remain untouched by the tide of darkness. He finds, "Hopelessness, mistrust; The mist of misery : Have begun to deepen all round." And still his feelings are not at all tied to any agitational side of external realities. He does visualize some mystic field of consciousness, in a way almost formless and unaccountable. It is therefore that he boldly asserts, "Although I fashioned and remained a singer of that which was limitless and eternal, I am very much a creator of the momentary and the instant."And finally

Pant, asserts "with the seeds of ego, it is a crop of anguish, breeding sharp suspicious.... As a solution of inquisitiveness, I shall raise a crop of humane qualities."

Kala Aur Burha Chand will be long remembered for its distinctive individuality. It has certainly added a new dimension to the Pant style of Hindi poetry.

P.K. Mishra

1961 Award

Bhagwaticharan Verma

Bhoole Bisre Chitra

Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi; 1959; 547 pp; Rs. 11.00

> "Sri Bhagwaticharan Verma (b. 1903) is a veteran poet and novelist. *Bhoole Bisre Chitra* is a novel depicting three generations of a middle class family in north India. The novel throws interesting sidelights on the national struggle for freedom and presents a vivid picture of our times delineated through a number of unforgettable characters, convincingly drawn."

Bhagwati Charan Verma's *Bhoole Bisre Chitra* is an epic novel divided into five parts. In the field of Hindi novel, after Premchand it is for the first time that we see such a comprehensive and artistic document of social and political history depicting chronological development and changes in values of the first phase of the modern Indian society. It narrates virtually the changes that occur in relations among the persons of four generations of a family and depicts the disintegration of the joint family system, state of the middle class, dominance of feudalism and capitalism and tension and struggle of generations breaking of conventions, consciousness of contact with new ideas, progress and capacity for radical thinking during the national movement for freedom. Munshi Shivlal, Jwala Parshad, Ganga Parshad and Naval Kishore are the representatives of four generations.

Shivlal is the representative of the first generation. He holds the favour of British Collector and due to this his English educated son Jawala Parshad succeeds in becoming Naib Tahsildar. Orderly woman Chhinaki tries that Jawala Parshad's wife Jamuna may go to Ghatampur with her husband. The changes in middle class life are symbolised by the character of Chhinaki. When the family of Munshi Radhelal with his good for nothing and licentious son comes to live in the Government bungalow of Jwala Parshad and Jwala groans with financial burden, Chhinaki becomes active. The joint family is now bound to disintegrate and here we see how a joint family becomes a hindrance in the development of the individual. Nambardar of Shivpura Lal Parbhu Dayal and his wife Jai Devi, with their own selfish motives, become intimate with Jwala Parsad and Jamuna. But after the murder of Parbhu Dayal, the intimacy and fascination of Jai Devi towards Jwala Parshad becomes more meaningful. The episode of the marriage of the daughter of Thakur Gajaraj Singh brings out the hollowness of feudalism. Inspite of the heavy indebtedness he cannot keep away from false pomp and show. The impudent Barjor Singh is also a natural symbol of false stubborness and boast. He is driven to suicide with a bad conscience. Jwala Parshad himself felt that there is a demon in Parbhu Dayal and Barjor Singh which does not let them do anything good. Parbhu Dayal's son Laxmi Chand is symbolic of neo-capitalism. There are also other characters like Mir Sakhawat Hussain and Thanedar Amjad Ali. Rights and power go on changing places. Shivlal comes to realise that his role in the family is like the role of Pandu in the *Mahabharata* and Radhelal's role is like that of Dhritarashtra. The perversions of the joint family are seen in the deeds of Kishan Lal and Shyam Lal. Ultimately Jwala Parshad has to separate the family of his uncle. Jwala Parshad's son Ganga Parshad is brought up in prosperity and luxury and has become a Deputy Collector. He is a man of the new age. He loves two women–Santo and a prostitute Malakha. With the motivation of her husband Radhakishan, Santo plays the filthy game of love with Mr. Watts and wins the title of 'Rai Bahadur' for Radhakishan and 'Rani Satwant Kaur' for herself. This is the vile face of capitalism. Ganga Parshad goes on living a dramatic life and realises the hypocrisy of his officership. He has no faith in the decayed moral idealism of his father and grandfather. He jerks away the

ties of the joint family which Munshi Shivlal and to some extent Jwala Parshad were protecting. Through the character of Ganga Parshad, the author has exposed the hollowness and immorality of the upper class. The author has provided a realistic depiction of contemporary communalism through the characters of Swami Jatilanand and Allama Vahasi.

Naval is a character who has grown up with self-respect during national freedom movement. He is the sparkling example of consciousness and independence and is determined to revenge his insult by the British. Gyan Prakash has political firmness and intelligence. On the other hand, in his opinion, Naval's career has no value and he drops his plan of appearing for the ICS. Due to this decision he has to lose his beloved Usha, the daughter of Rai Bahadur Kamata Nath. After his father's death he gets Vidya Devi to whom he was engaged before married, yet is insulted by money hunters. Naval is inspired by Gandhi and Satyagraha and joins the Salt Movement and decides that the national movement as his aim. In a way Naval is representative of bright aspirations of Satyagraha. The plot ends with the rise of sharp political awakening in the young generation.

On the whole the plot exposes the various historical processes of social development through a series of pictures and by the end we cross, in a very interesting way the journey of five decades of social, political, moral, cultural and economic development. The unity of the plot is never broken and the most vigorous aspect of Bhagawaticharan Verma's art, i.e. characterisation emerges. Though due to the big span of the canvas all characters can not be depicted in full detail, yet inspite of the limitations characters like Chhinaki, Jwala Parshad, Gyan Prakash, Lala Ripu Dman Singh leave an indelible impression in the mind of the reader because of their closeness to life and reality.

Here we have characters representing all communities. They may not have enough depth yet they represent the complete reality of contemporary life. *Bhoole Bisre Chitra* has undoubtedly made a big contribution to the progress of the Hindi novel.

K.D. Paliwal

1963 Award

Amrit Rai

Premchand: Kalam ka Sipahi

Hans Prakashan, Allahabad; 1962; xiii+679 pp.; Rs. 20.00

> "Sri Amrit Rai (b. 1921) is a distinguished short story writer and novelist. A worthy son of Premchand who made the modern novel in Hindi and Urdu, Sri Amrit Rai's stories and novels are marked by deep sympathy with the underdog in society.
>
> The Award book, *Premchand:Kalam ka Sipahi*, is not only the first complete biography of the illustrious author, but is also one of the first successful attempts in Hindi in the art of biography. For its wealth of documentation, its disarming sincerity, vigour of expression and inspired style, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporay Hindi literature."

This is by far the most comprehensive biography of Munshi Premchand (1876-1936), the eminent Hindi and Urdu writer, written by his son Amrit Rai.

The author, a versatile Hindi writer has taken pains to collect a vast volume of source material, including details about Premchand's early life, his innumerable letters–perhaps the most trying and difficult thing to collect in India–his numerous articles and stories lying buried in the godowns of editorial offices, etc., and with their help has presented an exhaustive and in-depth study of Premchand as a writer and social thinker, in the context of his times. As we go through the pages of the book, we see the evolution of the writer through the vicissitudes and struggles of his personal life, as also through the social and political currents and cross-currents which were shaping the destiny of his country and with which he was intensely involved. Thus, we are enabled to understand his multi-faceted personality in the context of his times and to assess his contribution, both as a writer and as a social thinker.

The source material, letters, reminiscences, anecdotes, etc., are not given separately but are fused into the texture of the book,

thus illuminating both the narrative and the reactions of the writer to the difficult events and developments of his time.

Since the book is written by the writer's own son, it gains in terms of authenticity and intimacy.

At the close of the book, a detailed account is given of each novel, the date and time of its publication, the conditions under which it was published, and also a list of his short stories with their dates of publication and the names of the journals in which they were first published. This material provides important data for research scholars for a close and chronological study of Premchand's writings. The book contains nineteen illustrations relating to the author, his family and the surroundings in which he lived and worked.

Bhisham Sahni

1964 Award

Agyeya (S.H. Vatsyayan)

Angan ke Par Dvar

Bharatiya Jnanpith, Varanasi; 1961; 90 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Sri S.H. Vatsyayan 'Agyeya' (b. 1911) is a distinguished Hindi poet, novelist and critic. Born with a restless spirit, Sri Vatsyayan has been an experimenter *par excellence,* not only in letters but also in life. He joined the revolutinary movement while still at college, was a prisoner and a detenu under British rule for several years, and later worked successively as an editor, a lexicographer, a captain in the army, broadcaster and a visiting professor of literature and culture abroad. His writings have been no less varied. He has to his credit seveal works of short stories, travelogues, essays, belles-lettres, criticism, editing, compilation and translation, besides poetry and novel, which are his forte. As a novelist he is best known for *Shekhar: Ek Jivani,* the lifestory of a young revolutionary in quest of truth and meaning of life. As a poet he soon made his mark as a foremost poet of the new Experimental School in Hindi poetry.

The Award book, *Angan ke Par Dvar,* is the latest collection of Sri Vatsyayan's poems and is the work of a mature mind

in search of deeper values. For its remarkably creative use of the language and commendable restraint in emotional expression, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

Angan ke Par Dvar is a collection of poems written by 'Agyeya' during the period 1959-61. Though 'Agyeya' has been opposed to Romanticism as such, yet in this collection, we find his individualism touching new egoistic heights and we also find the romantic element pervading them.

In the eighteen poems of the first section 'Antahsalila', we find an intensity unknown in his earlier poems. "Saraswari Putra" reveals a consicousness that is permeated by a deep innate satire which lays bare the environs within and without the temple in all its comprehensive dimensions. Poems like "Pahhan", "Parai Rahen", "Palakon ka Kampan", "Ek Prashna" and "Chiriya Ne Kaha", reveal a rich world of feeling and experience, which emerges as a sure pointer to the poet's intensive endeavours and attainments both in the realm of feeling and expression. The felicity of expression and style of the poem "Ek Prashna" is a proof of the poet's capability to cummunicate profound personal experiences in an easy and intelligible diction.

In the second section 'Chakranta Shila', the author has given no titles to the poems. Most of his poems, according to the current idiom, are subjective and personal. Some poems do give experssion–at least partly, if not wholly–to his latent spirituality. Some of his poems–which throw light on certain specific moods–leave him neither an experimentalist nor do they allow his inclusion in the 'Nai Kavita' fold. These poems have such a comprehensive and profound significance that they retain their abstrusity even in an easy and simple diction. There are a number of poems in this collection which are woven around 'Mahashoonya' (Great Void). The poet cherishes the wish to secure as a simile the writ of destiny scribed in its perch on the endless 'Chakranta Shila'. The whole figure etched out by the poet for indentificatin of the pearl emerges as a frog. It is not capable of raising an image but even so these poems–big and small have the power to project the poet's feeling and thought in a concrete form.

"Asadhya Veena" is a poem based on a current legend. Some scholars ascribe it to Chinese origin and have also linked it with

Buddhism. Whatever it be, there is not the least doubt about the potentiality, vitality and artistic excellence of this masterpiece. The "Asadhya Veena" is undoubtedly, a masterpiece and an invaluable contribution to Hindi poetry–bubbling with creative vitality.

Thus the three-dimensional poetic collection, *Angan ke Par Dvar* evokes spontaneous acclaim for the poet's creativity and his creative endeavour. This poetic compilation will, no doubt, be hailed as the next link beyond 'Nai Kavita' in the historical evolution of Hindi poetry. These poems are not rooted in experimentalism, they are synthetical compositions of feeling and emotional experiences.

V. Snatak

1965 Award

Nagendra

Rasa-Siddhanta

National Publishing House, Delhi; 1964; viii +363; Rs. 20.00

"Dr. Nagendra (b. 1915) is a distinguished scholar, critic and essayist in Hindi. Born in the district of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, Dr. Nagendra received his early education at Atrauli, Anoopshahar and Chandausi and later joined the St. John's College, Agra, and received his degree of Master of Arts in English Literature in 1936. In 1937, he got his degree of Master of Arts in Hindi Literature from the Nagpur University. Beginning his career as a teacher in English Literature at the Delhi Commercial College, he qualified for the D. Litt. in Hindi Literature from Agra University in 1947. After a short broadcasting career in the All India Radio, he was appointed Professor and Head of the Hindi Department, Delhi University, in 1955.

After a brief venture as a poet of the post-Chhayavad romantic school, Dr. Nagendra turned to literary criticism. Soon after his college he published critical studies of Sumitranandan Pant and *Saket* (by Maithilisharan Gupta) which were widely appreciated. Since then he has made a close and conscientious study of the theory of poetics, both Indian and Western, and

has to his credit a number of valuable works on the principles of literary criticism. He has also edited and compiled several important volumes on poetics and on history of literature. His critical essays, collected in several volumes, have been much admired for their clarity of thought and crispness of style. This has brought him recognition in the Hindi literary circles and has won for him the State Prizes from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh as well as the Dalmia Puraskar.

The Award book, *Rasa-Siddhanta*, is a masterly exposition and interpretation of the ancient Indian poetics and their application to literature today. For its lucid analysis and comprehensive sweep of the subject, and for the vigour of its expression, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

Rasa-Siddhanta is an important source-book of literary criticism in Hindi and, since it deals with the history of the most important tradition of Indian aesthetics, has a pan-Indian significance. The theory of Rasa in India has been built up by several scholars belonging to different schools of philosophy and therefore there have been many problems, issues and questions which await satisfactory answers. The book discusses these questions in all seriousness and has arrived at satisfactory conclusions. For example, one of the most raging questions is as to how can the experience of pathos be delightful? Nagendra finds the answer to this question in the equilibrium of emotions in a work of art. Nagendra has an advantage over the ancient critics and that is, he can take the help of the western scholars.

Nagendra's book is valuable for another more important reason. What exactly is the relevance of the theory of Rasa which had its origin in the poetry and drama of the classical age, to the modern times? The author has proved the relevance in clear terms. According to him the doctrine of Rasa is not opposed to principal moral aesthetics and although deeprooted in emotions it does not preclude the element of intellect. The art-experience which the spectator or reader gets through the medium of the word and its meaning is both sensual and intellectual. Therefore it is subtler than sense-experience and also avoids the abstractness of intellectual experience. The theory of Rasa, because of its firm basis in Indian humanism, would be a criterion not only for the evaluation of ancient works of art but it would also help us to judge works of art of the future.

The book proves beyond doubt that the theory of Rasa is built on the sound foundation of concepts of universal significance.

Suresh Chandra Trivedi

1966 Award

Jainendrakumar

Muktibodh

Poorvoday Prakashan, Delhi; 1965; 148 pp.; Rs. 4.50

"Sri Jainendrakumar (b. 1905), a distinguished novelist, short story writer, essayist and exponent of Gandhian thought was drawn into the freedom struggle in his early youth. After a course at Jain Gurukul, Hastinapur, he passed the matriculation examination as a private candidate in 1919, and joined the Kashi Hindi Viswavidyalaya for higher studies. But he soon gave it up to join the Non-Cooperation movement and went to jail twice.

Sri Jainendrakumar made his literary debut in 1929 with a collection of short stories, entitled *Phansi* which drew the attention of no less a person than Munshi Premchand. The contact thus established soon developed into an intimate bond which continued till Premchand's death in 1936. The same year was published Sri Jainendrakumar's novel *Sunita* creating a stir in the Hindi literary world by its daring psycho-analysis and originality of theme and style. With his masterpiece *Tyagapatra* in 1937, Sri Jainendrakumar joined the top rank among Hindi novelists. Simple in language and intimate in style, his writings bring to the fore the ethical and moral problems facing the present day society in their many ramifications. His essays, seemingly casual but always thought-provoking, are distinguished by a typically Socratic manner of getting at the truth by sifting the essential from the non-essential.

The Award book, *Muktibodh*, is a short novel depicting the contempoary dilemma of a political leader brought up in Gandhian idealism and caught in the vortex of power politic-

For its psychological insight, its courageous treatment of a contemporary theme, and its humanistic approach, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

In the novelette *Muktibodh,* Jainendra has depicted the complex and vast experiences of life with the fineness of craft and artistic awareness. The work comes out of his deep thinking. As far as the experience is concerned it is gathered from inner and outer life. The intricacies, dilemmas, tensions, inner struggles and worries of human beings have been woven and created here with great subtiety and temperance (with an artistic judgement). Here is a novelist expert in saying suggestively what he wants to say. *Mukaibodh* may not have the vastness of experience found in Premchand's novels, yet it has the same depth and intensity of feelings and emotions. The artist in him has become identical with the personality of the main character Shri Sahay. But it has not become a hindrance in developing the character.

The opening sentences of *Muktibodh* suggest the crisis of the inner self of the person. Here we find the dilemma of a person who has attained the maturity of wisdom. This dilemma drives away his sleep. This state of mind resembles that of Kabir and compels him to think and forces him to write. *Muktibodh* shows the world, the agony of man who is made restless by the various struggles, tensions and intricacies of life.

Shri Sahay has a highly complex personality. Jainendra has not rendered him an ordinary political character rather he has presented him in a special form. If we accept the views of Tamara, Thakur Jasdev Singh, Kunwanra Neela, etc. about Shri Sahay, it is clear that inspite of being a minister he is not a shrewd politician. He is distressed about the probability of the partition of the country. He is perturbed about a situation where politics has lost ethics. He hates the leaders who are not bothered about the pleasures or pains of the common people. Like a philosopher, he ponders over the question of life and death, virtue and sin. He hates the leaders who have exiled the soul of Gandhi away from the country. Sahay's personality is in a way quite close to the philosophic and thoughtful personality of Jainendra himself. The novel is narrated in the first person so there is a good deal of scope for depicting dilemma and insight.

Man-woman relations have been depicted here through many angles. What Shri Sahay can not get from his wife Rajya Shree, he gets from his beloved Neela. But the affection is not based solely on sex. It is such a sublime emotion that transforms 'sex' into 'love'. Shri Sahay's wisdom in understanding his relatives, friends, etc. shows his 'Sanskari' personality. His analysis of human relations makes it clear that politics has not made his personality static.

What distinguishes this novelette from others is its intellectual approach to the complexity of life. The experience has no end. The novelette is written in a new technique. Its end marks a new beginning. Life here is like a current which has no human control. The fact is that though the question of existence has been raised here, yet it is not an existentialist novel. The creative skill of Jainendra is so powerful here that he elude all description and yet says everything through a few suggestive sentences. The author does not advocate anything here, situations themselves explain everything.

The novelette has given shape to a completely new and untouched world of experience. Such a deep analysis of the inner-psyche of the human mind is a great acheivement in the Hindi novel. Undoubtedly *Muktibodh* marks a significant turns in the development of Hindi novel.

K.D. Paliwal

1967 Award

Amritlal Nagar

Amrit Aur Vish

Lok Bharti Prakashan, Allahabad; 1966; 716 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Amritlal Nagar (b. 1916) is a distinguished novelist and author. Born in a Gujarati family domiciled in Uttar Pradesh, Sri Nagar took to literary writing at a very early age and, but for a brief spell at Akashvani, Lucknow, as a Producer of Hindi plays during 1953-56, has devoted all his time and energy to his creative pursuits. Gifted with a prolific pen and a keen sense of humour, Sri Nagar has to his credit more

than thirty published works to date, which cover many genres and include translations from Gujarati and Marathi, as well as a novel based on the Tamil classic *Silappadikaram*.

A stalwart in the Premchand tradition, Sri Nagar wields his pen to voice the common man's trials and aspirations, in a prose at once colloquial and vivid. His best known novel *Boond Aur Samudra* (1956) bears witness to this concern for the common man and is a vivid and intimate picture of his life in a Lucknow *mohalla*.

The Award book, *Amrit Aur Vish*, is his latest novel depicting the life of the people in an urban locality struggling against poverty, avarice, superstition and moral degradation towards social progress. For its wide sweep of imagination, its realistic portrayal, narrative power and vigour, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

Amrit Aur Vish is a social novel of special dimensions based on contemporary social life. It is based on the reminiscences of the older generation and on the experiences of the author's own generation, covering almost the whole of this century. The book presents a panorama of multifarious types of characters originating from the families of feudal lords, nawabs, emerging bourgeois, the neo-rich class and the bureaucracy, the middle class, the lower middle class and the downtrodden, they represent both the trends, i.e. virtuous and vicious.

While depicting the younger generation, the author has been able to clearly illustrate the new facts of our life that the younger generation display. Even though they seem to possess an uncontrolled, unchannelised and anarchistic revolutionary fervour, nevertheless, their activities and tendencies reflect their deep love and concern for human justice, equity and conscience. Characters like Ramesh and Rani represent the virtuous potential of the younger generation in the lower middle-class structure of our society. They are both realistic and idealistic, full of noble ideas with the capacity resist and assert and are forward-looking. Rani is a widow from childhood. She loves Ramesh. Ramesh accepts her as his wife despite objections from both sides. Rani also withstands the pressures of her surroundings and acts bravely. Lachho, however, represents the misguided youth who comes to the right path at the end.

Putti guru is an interesting character. He is an orthodox Brahmin, a fanatic and conservative devotee and an addict. Rani's father is a moneyless *thakur* (Rajput) who is driven to vicious means of livelihood. Mr. and Mrs Khanna (Bahanji) are typical and familiar social reformers commonly found in our literary fictions and films. The roles of such characters in society can never be underestimated.

The novel creates a powerful satire in the descriptions of various events. One such example is the catastrophic event, the devastating flood in the Gomti River which swept Lucknow and its surrounding areas. The distinctive aspect of this novel is the creative style which does not hide from the readers the sources from which the author has drawn. In this process the author traces the real characters from his experiences of life and draws their parallels in the fictional fabrics of his creativity. Thus the novel creates parallels between facts and fiction and they never meet in the two-fold plot. However, these two folds of the plot have their inter-relations in the creative process of the novelist. Thus the novel presents a unique combination of the life story of the narrator as well as the fictional part of the story told by the narrator divulging the secrets of his own creative process in particular and the creative process of all novel-writing in general. It is in this respect that the novel deserves the attention of all literary minded people.

Raj Kumar Saini

1968 Award

Harivansh Rai Bachchan

Do Chattanen

Rajpal and Sons, Delhi; 1965; 215 pp.; Rs. 7.00

"Sri Harivansh Rai Bachchan (b. 1907) was born in a middle-class family at Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. Dr. Harivansh Rai, better known to his readers as Bachchan, graduated from the Allahabad University in 1929 and was soon drawn into the vortex of the freedom struggle. After a brief career as a journalist,

he was appointed as a teacher in the local Agrawal Vidyalaya. Continuing with his studies, he obtained the M.A. and B.T. degrees and joined the Allahabad University as a research scholar and later as a lecturer in English Literature in 1941.

Sri Bachchan began his poetic career early and published his first collection of lyrics, *Tera Haar*, in 1932. With the publication of his work Madhushala in 1935 his position as a major Hindi poet was firmly established. He has more than forty published works to his credit, including verse renderings of the *Gita* and Shakespeare's plays.

In 1954 Sri Bachchan received the degree of Ph. D. from Cambridge University for his research work on the poetry of W.B. Yeats, and after working as Producer at Akashvani, Allahabad, for sometime, joined the Union Ministry of External Affairs as a Special Officer. In 1966 he was nominated by the President of India to the Rajya Sabha and the same year was awarded the Soviet Land Nehru Award for his Hindi translation of Russian poems.

The Award book, *Do Chattanen*, was first published in 1965 and contains, along with a number of other poems, the long title poem contrasting Sisyphus, the symbolic character from Greek mythology, with Hanuman. For its vigour of expression and maturity of outlook, the book has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

Harivansh Rai Bachchan is a popular poet of the post-Chhayavadi Hindi lyrical poetry. The book *Do Chattanen* contains fifty-three poems written between 1962 and 1964. The most important poem of this collection is "Do Chattanen or Sisyphus Vs Hanuman." In this long poem, Bachchan has presented two points of view of life by using Sisyphus and Hanuman as symbols. Both Sisyphus and Hanuman aspire to become immortal, but their means are different. Sisyphus imprisons death to become immortal. His act of imprisoning death and becoming immortal proves to be a curse. He lives an endless suffering, incessantly rolling a huge stone up to the top of a hill. This is the symbol of meaningless life full of torture and agony. Sisyphus symbolizes the faithless western man of the twentieth century. Contrary to Sisyphus, Hanuman becomes immortal through devotion. He is full of faith and humility. His immortality is not

a curse, but a boon. He lifts *Dronachal* but once, and this mountain bears *Sanjivini*. Hanuman symbolizes the power that is directed towards Shiva (the good). This is the Indian view of life. *Do Chattanen* will be remembered for this long poem. It does not mean that the other poems are of no significance. They are significant because they reflect the mental activity and attitudes of the poet during his seventh decade. In these poems he has reacted to many things, such as the Chinese aggression, Nehru's death, anger of youth, poet's old age, contemporary literary scene, academics, etc. The poet has reached there where hesitation, fear, anxiety, success and failure have no meaning. He has started contemplating death. He feels that the time has come to depart from this world. The poems of *Do Chattanen* represent the clarity of meaning and lucidity of expression of Bachchan's poetry.

Har Dayal

1969 Award

Shrilal Shukla

Rag Darbari

Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi; 1968; 425 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Shrilal Shukla (b. 1925) is a distinguished novelist and satirist. Born at village Atrauli in the Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh, Sri Shukla received his education first at Lucknow and then at Kanpur and Allahabad. A graduate of the Allahabad University he entered the state Civil Service in 1950 and is at present working as Additional District Magistrate at Kanpur.

Although Sri Shukla became interested in literary writing fairly early in his career, he started writing regularly only in 1957 when he published his first novel, *Sooni Ghati Ka Sooraj*. His second novel, *Agyatvas*, was published in 1961. Besides his novels, Sri Shukla has also written a large number of satirical

essays and articles which are remarkable for their pungency and wit. Two collections of his satirical writings have already been published.

The award book, *Rag Darbari* is his latest novel which lays bare the sordidness and pettiness of the every-day life in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, and is a daring commentary on the greed, selfishness and corruption in our social life. For its sharpness of style and realistic characterisation the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

Shivpalganj is a typical village somewhere in Uttar Pradesh inhabited by ordinary people with their village-level squabbles and intrigues. In a rambling documentary style the novelist scans this obscure landscape. As the novel grows the characters also grow into recognisable social and political types. It is their uncanny, and sometimes deliberately mischievous, resemblance to an average Indian leader – with his unscrupulous ways playing havoc with Indian life and morals – which the author satirises. His deep human concern, a keen sense of humour and irony, are marked by subtle craftsmanship. It is the careful juxtaposition of the real and the typical, regional and the universal, which gives to this novel its special authenticity and punch. The environment in *Rag Darbari* is important : it has a certain stubbornness of character which does not change, nor does it change anything, and as a vast human drama unfolds itself against a dusty rural backdrop, certain important points emerge both as comments and as observations. Ironically it is the pathetic heroism of martyrs like Langar, fighting for justice and fairness, who painfully remind us of what is seriously at stake in our national and personal characaters.

Known for his satires even before *Rag Darbari* was published, Shrilal Shukla has a way with language which has the subdued flavour of sophisticated old Sanskrit classics and the robust rustic humour of spoken Avadhi. *Rag Darbari* remains one of those landmarks which has raised satirical fiction in Hindi to classical stature.

Kunwar Narain

1970 Award

Ram Vilas Sharma

Nirala ki Sahitya Sadhana

Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi; 1960; 630 pp.; Rs. 27.00

"Ram Vilas Sharma (b. 1912) is a distinguished poet, linguist and critic in Hindi. Born in a peasant family of Avadh, Sharma received his education first at Jhansi and then at Lucknow University. An M.A. and later Ph.D. in English Literature, he was for a period lecturer in the University of Lucknow, and since 1943 has been Head of English Department of the Balwant Rajput College at Agra.

Robust and progressive in outlook, Sharma was soon drawn into the new intellectual movement in the country and was closely associated with the poet Nirala whose fiery personality influenced him in various ways. Soon Sharma took to experimentation in poetry and was one of the seven new poets in *Taar Saptak*.

Sharma began his career as a critic even when a university student and his early writings bear eloquent witness to his fervour and his incisive wit. With the spread of Marxist thought in the Hindi region, Sharma took a leading role in the progressive literary movement in Uttar Pradesh. His critical essays of this period which later appeared in a number of volumes are remarkable for their daring and deep analytical approach.

The Award book, *Nirala ki Sahitya Sadhana*, is a full and comprehensive biography of the pioneer and dynamic Hindi poet Nirala. For its deep insight into the many facets of the genius and personality of the myriad-minded poet, for its masterly analysis and vigorous style, and for its wealth of biographical detail the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

This biography written by Ram Vilas Sharma is a work of historical and literary importance in terms of quality as well as quantity. It is written in the style of a modern epic novel reflecting the various aspects of the personality of the great poet Nirala and his writings

in a creative and critical manner with a progressive outlook. Unlike other Marxist critics of Hindi, Sharma, in this book, avoids both types of extreme approaches in the assessment of a creative personality. He adopts neither a mechnical approach nor is he sentimental. He also does not carry postures of being over-objective like the extreme leftists and also avoids being over-subjective like the extreme reactionaries.

Sharma has tried to reconstruct the total life of Nirala using all the material available to him. He has taken note of almost all the available historical facts regarding the life of the poet, his relatives and close friends. Where such facts were not available, he has filled the gaps by using creatively all the hints reflected in the writings of Nirala and in the writings of others about Nirala. The author never lacks human sympathy for the poet which is required while writing such biography without having a soft spot for any misplaced sympathy. At the same time, the author has remained dispassionate towards the weaknesses and contradictions of the poet Nirala, and has never over-played his human sympathy. For example, while referring to Nirala's literary duels with the great poets Pant and Prasad, Sharma has not forgotton to mention the positive qualities of these two contemporary poets. In rendering the various internal details with regard to his family background with social and cultural suroundings, etc., the author's prime objective has been to depict the internal personality (i.e. mentality, mental framework and Nirala's apprehension of internal world in his own-self).

Sharma has described the characteristics of this biography in his own words:

"I have presented an objective portrait of his life as far as possible which is not meant to intoxicate the reader but to help him with his sense of reason to understand the personality of Nirala. A majority of biographies end with the death of a hero, but this work does not. In this book, there are various chapters devoted to the analysis of personality. The main purpose is to understand the personality of Nirala."

This book is the first volume of a major project on Nirala running into 1500 pages treatise on the personality and creative work of Nirala.

Raj Kumar Saini

1971 Award

Namwar Singh

Kavita ke Naye Pratiman

Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi; 1968; 245 pp.; Rs. 12.00

"Dr. Namwar Singh (b. 1927) is a distinguished author and critic in Hindi. Born in a peasant family at Jiwanpur (Dist. Varanasi), Dr. Namwar Singh was educated at the Banaras Hindu University, obtaining the degree of Ph. D. in Hindi Literature in 1953. He then taught at Banaras and Sagar Universities. At present he is working as Professor and Head of the Hindi Department, Jodhpur University.

Dr. Namwar Singh wrote poetry during his student days. Soon he was influenced by Marxist thought, and joined the Progressive Writers movement. He published his first book of essays, *Bakalam Khud*, in 1951. Later he turned to literary criticism, and has published a number of works. He also edits the Hindi quarterly *Alochana*.

The Award book, *Kavita ke Naye Pratiman*, is his latest work of litrary criticism first published in 1968. It is a comprehensive study of the New Poetry movement in Hindi emphasising the necessity for a new criteria to evaluate poetry. For its clarity of vision and analytic acumen, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

The new criteria springing up in the Hindi poetry after the Chhayavad have been marked by Namwar Singh, a noted Hindi critic, in his widely discussed critical work *Kavita ke Naye Pratiman*. The criteria are those of Realistic poetry : for example, poetic diction, 'plainness of statement', dramatic poetic structure, absurdity and irony, complexity and tension of experience, and honesty. These are related to both the form and content of poetry. The criteria concerning poetic diction, 'plainness of statement', and structure are related to the form while the other criteria are related to the content of poetry. What characterises Singh's approach is that he analyses neither of the two sets of criteria

as independent in itself. He analyses the formal criteria in relation to the content and vice-versa.

As Singh is a Marxist critic, there has been a long continued debate on his book since its publication; and it has been said that he has been influenced by American New-Criticism which is formalistic criticism. The charge is baseless, as he has not only discussed the new criteria relatively, but also established, referring to *Muktibodh*, the foremost Marxist poet of Hindi, that the value of poetry is ultimately determined by a consideration of the extent to which the world of poetry, created out of the dialectical relationship between form and content, is real, and to what extent it deepens and enriches our understanding of reality. Though Marxist literary criticism of Hindi has been successful in explaining the social contexts of poetry, it has failed in revealing the world that poetry creates. To establish the relative freedom of poetry and to analyse the new criteria coming into existence in the Realistic poetry i.e. *Nayee Kavita* of Hindi were the two tasks before Marxist litrary criticism. Singh has done the job in a scholarly manner and thus placed the Hindi Marxist literary criticism on more sophisticated plane.

Nand Kishore Nawal

1973 Award

Hazari Prasad Dwivedi

Alok Parva

Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi; 1972; 222 pp.; Rs. 14.00

"Sri Hazari Prasad Dwivedi (b. 1907), born in Ballia (UP) was educated in the Sanskrit tradition of the family. He received the degree of Jyotishacharya in 1930, and joined Santiniketan as a teacher, where he was director of Hindi Bhavan from 1940 to 1950. He headed the Hindi Department at Banaras Hindu University in 1950. He was a member of the first official Languages Commission and was awarded Padmabhushan in 1957. One of the founding members of the Sahitya Akademi, and till recently a member of its Executive Board, Sri Dwivedi has been closely associated

with several literary institutions and has been a member of a delegation of writers to the Soviet Union. In 1960, he joined the Punjab University as Head of its Hindi Department. In 1961, he received a special Tagore Centenary Award of the Sahitya Akademi. He is now Chairman of the U.P. Hindi Granth Akademi. He has so far published more than twenty books of literary criticism, essays, research studies and novels including his novel *Banbhatta ki Atmakatha* which has been translated into various Indian languages through the Sahitya Akademi.

The award book, *Alok Parva*, is the latest collection of his essays published in 1972. For its depth of perception and its lucid prose style, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Hindi literature."

Hazari Prasad Dwivedi was one of the foremost writers in Hindi literature. He heralded a new trend in the discipline of essay writing, thus generating an entirely new genre in Hindi fiction-writing.

Alok Parva is a collection of twenty-seven essays, including in its pages some of the most significant essays which have been hailed to be amongst the best writings of Hindi.

Dwivedi's essays are full of artistic grandeur carrying as they do a very pertinent message for our generation, with utmost simplicity. The essays of *Alok Parva*, beautifully depict the cultural heritage of ancient India, at the same time accelerating the continuity of our glorious tradition.

As a foremost scholar of this century, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has done commendable work on the ancient and medieval period of Hindi literature, and argued in his most innovative style that our culture had a colourful past and it stressed the human aspect of life. In *Alok Parva*, his essays on the Himalayas, on the art and grandeur of Kalidas, and on the democracy and language will long be cherished for the sincere conviction of the writer, who believes that through cultural renaissance alone a nation can carve out a bright future for the people.

Ganga Prasad Vimal

1974 Award

Shiva Mangal Singh 'Suman'

Mitti ki Barat

Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi; 1972; 192 pp.; Rs 12.00

> "Dr. Shiva Mangal Singh 'Suman', a distinguished Hindi poet, was born in 1916. He received his Doctor of Letters from Banaras Hindu University in 1950 and is at present the Vice-Chancellor of Vikram University, Ujjain. He has received many Awards for his literary works, including the Soviet Land Nehru Award for this very work. He was Press and Cultural Attache in the Indian Embassy in Nepal and has travelled widely. He is a member of the General Council and the Hindi Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi. He has published eight collections of poetry, one play and two prose works.
>
> *Mitti ki Barat* is considered an outstanding contribution to modern Hindi poetry for its progressive outlook and simplicity of diction."

Mitti ki Barat is Shiva Mangal Singh Suman's seventh poetry collection. Seventy-two poems of this collection were written during the seventh decade (1961-1970). There is so much thematic variety in these poems that the poet calls this collection a *bhanumati ka pitara* (a container of an amazing variety of things) and thinks of it as a loss to arrange them in a logical order. He has divided the poems of this collection into six sections. The first section contains mainly patriotic poems. In these poems his love for his motherland, its nature, its festivals, its common folks and great personalities, and some nostalgic memories are expressed. The poem "Mitti ki Barat" depicts the symbolic meeting of the ashes of Kamala Nehru and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at Sangam. The poems in the second section express various feelings of love and sensuality. The poems of the third section are about great personalities of India and the world. In the fourth section four poems are collected. Of these, three poems are about Mauritius and one about the poet's village and his mother. The poems in the fifth section are inspired directly or indirectly by the Chinese aggression on India. The last section contains some miscellaneous poems.

Collectively the poems of *Mitti ki Barat* present no coherent image of Suman's poetic personality. They are poetic expressions of his mental impressions and reactions to post-Independance Indian reality. The poems are simple, direct and uncomplicated. The effectiveness of these poems lies not in artistic refinement but in the passion that flows as an undercurrent. Most of the poems are rhymed and written in regular metres. The poems, which are written in free verse or in irregular metres, are not bereft of rhythm.

Har Dayal

1975 Award

Bhisham Sahni

Tamas

Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi; 1973; 253 pp.

"Sri Bhisham Sahni, distinguished novelist and writer of short stories in Hindi, was born in 1915 in Rawalpindi, now in Pakistan. He took his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English and is a Senior Lecturer at the Zakir Husain Memorial College, Delhi. He spent nearly seven years in the Soviet Union where he translated a number of Russian and Soviet classics into Hindi. During 1965-68, he edited *Nayi Kahani yan*, a magazine of short stories. He has published three novels and four collections of his short stories so far. His works have been translated into Russian, English and Malayalam. The Government of Punjab honoured him with the Shiromani Lekhak Award last year.

Tamas is considered an outstanding contribution to Hindi literature for its artistic control, firm grasp of reality, excellence of characterisation, and its humanity and authenicity of experience."

'Tamas' means darkness, i.e. darkness of communalism and also is suggestive of ignorance on the part of our people who fall victims to the sinister designs of the forces of communalism, an off-shoot of imperialism left over by the foreign rulers in our country. This

novel is based on the communal riots in the early parts of 1947 which broke out in Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan). The author, Bhisham Sahni, had joined the relief committee at that time as a member of Congress State Committee. In this novel, he has been successful in transforming his experiences, observations and close knowledge of the eye-witness accounts during the culmination and epidemic spread of the one of the most ghastly communal outbursts of the 20th century in this sub-continent.

The secular and progressive outlook of the author has enabled him to project an objective, dispassionate and a purposeful epic-scenario of the most tragic events which took place at that time. The peculiarity of the fiction partly lies in the fact that it is a story of five days only with a spred-over of epical dimension and partly that it is a story of circumstances prevailing over individual characters without any hero or anti-hero as such. It presents a spectrum of contradictions arising out of a communal mentality of human mind, carried over by the imperial forces, in collusion with narrow minded persons with their self-styled interpretation of history and social surroundings. The role of foreign rulers has been appropriately underlined in a suggestive style. The foreign rulers in India always proved to be the starters and catalytic agents of these communal riots even though they never escaped any opportunity to project themselves as mediators and peace makers after the riots have developed into an atmosphere of uncivilised behaviour, insecurity and violent anarchy. Communal forces in the country are still active and never miss any opportunity to flare up for selfish and narrow motives. It is in this context that the novel is all the more relevant even today and the story of five days, before Independence, becomes a story of more than a period of fifty years; what has been depicted about the events around Rawalpindi becomes a description of a chain of events in the country.

The novel is written in a simple, lucid and natural style with a balanced outlook. The language and diction used in the fiction takes a creative form which looks like a transparent crystal with the combination of its content. There is also a view that the story-content is too small to asimilate in itself, the characteristic of an epic-novel and due to this the plot seems to be over-dealt with.

Tamas transmits a message of warning to our people. The people should not be misled by the communal propaganda. They should not fall a prey to the onslaught of communalism. It clearly depicts the sad after-affects of such onslaughts of communalism. The novel demonstrates beyond a shadow of doubt that it is the common people, the poor and the innocent that are worst affected in communal riots.

Raj Kumar Saini

1976 Award

Yashpal

Meri Teri Uski Baat

Lok Bharati Prakashan, Allahabad; 1974; 761 pp.; Rs. 45.00

> "Sri Yashpal, distinguished Hindi novelist and short story writer, was born in 1903 at Ferozpur, Punjab. A graduate from the National College, Lahore, Sri Yashpal grew into an active revolutionary and came to be known as one of the closest associates of such patriots as Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad. He went under-ground after the Sanders Assasination and the unearthing of the Lahore Bomb Factory. Yashpal was responsible for the bomb explosion under Lord Irwin's train in December 1929. He had many armed encounters with the police and was arrested in 1932 and sentenced to imprisonment for life but was released in 1938. An author of international repute and recipient of many literary honours, Sri Yashpal, who passed away on 26 December 1976, sixteen days after the declaration of the Award, leaves behind him more than 50 books, twelve of them novels and sixteen collections of short stories.
>
> *Meri Teri Uski Baat* is considered an outstanding contribution to Hindi literature for is depiction of the various cross-currents shaping modern Indian society, its racy and virile prose, masterly stylistic variations and deep human commitment."

This novel, based on the history of Indian's struggle for Independence, covers almost all the events of the first half of the 20th century,

particularly the activities of the Indian National Congress and other revolutionary activities in general. It depicts and brings to the forefront the inner struggle which continued within the Congress up to the last moment of our slavery. The author underlines the inner and outer contradictions, without favour or prejudice, which played a leading role in the political and social life of our country. He has conveyed his critical notes, not through statements but through the creative analysis of events, making them an integral part of the plot of the novel. The novel contains historical characters as well as imaginary ones and the inter-relation of these two types of characters is well-maintained with artistic fervour and flavour.

The author has maintained artistically both the inner and outer plots of the novel. The outer plot narrates beautifully the self-contained and self-explanatory accounts of our political scenario whereas the inner plot depicts the life of individuals, males and females, existing in our society at that time under the shadow of that political scenario. Yashpal thus has been able to draw an artistic as well as realistic sketch of the personalities growing and shaping into full-fledged heroes and anti-heroes of that crucial period. In addition to this, he has also depicted those mediocre type of individuals who were neither heroes nor anti-heroes, representing the mentalities and activities of a sizable majority of our people at that time. There were actives as well as inactives, enlightened as well as non-enlightened, intellectuals as well as non-intellectuals and also those who were this or that. The story of middle class Usha, a university student with her revolutionary romanticism reflecting the feelings and aspirations of the young generation of pre-Independence era is an additional attraction of the novel which is comparable to the feelings and aspirations of the young generation of today.

Meri Teri Uski Baat is no doubt one of the best novels in Hindi written in epical style on our struggle for freedom. As is typical of him, Yashpal infuses revolutionary romanticism with progressive realism in such a way that the whole blending becomes an artisitc panorama of Indian middle class life in general and Punjabi life in particular.

Raj Kumar Saini

1977 Award

Shamsher Bahadur Singh

Chuka bhi Hoon Nahin Main

Radhakrishna Prakashan, New Delhi; 1975; 103 pp.; Rs. 11.00

"Sri Shamsher Bahadur Singh, distinguished Hindi poet, was born at Dehradun in 1911. Abandoning his studies after his M.A. (Previous) in English in 1938, he gave himself fully to poetry. Four of his collections of poems have been published so far and he also has one volume each of short stories and essays to his credit. Sri Singh, who is equally at home in Urdu and English, has translated extensively from them into Hindi. His translation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* into Hindi has been widely appreciated. Hailed as a poets poet, he was the recipient of the Madhya Pradesh Sahitya Parishad Tulasi Award in 1977. Sri Singh has edited several literary magazines and retired as the Hindi editor in the Urdu-Hindi Dictionary Project of Delhi University in 1976. He is also deeply interested in painting.

Chuka bhi Hoon Nahin Main is considered an outstanding contribution to Hindi literature for its intensely personal yet highly disciplined diction and style, unique sense of earnestness and involvement with language and life, and depth of noble emotions which have their roots in Man's humanity and culture."

Chuka bhi Hoon Nahin Main is fairly representative of Shamsher Bahadur Singh's poetry. The poems of this collection were written between 1938 and 1970.

There are two types of poems in *Chuka bhi Hoon Nahin Main*. One type may be called romantic, individualistic and formalistic, dealing with love, despair, memories of the past, natural beauty, etc. "Aik Neela Dariya Baras Raha", "Yaden", "Yoga", "O Yuga Aa", "Suryast", "Kiran Rekha Tilak", "Surya-Apolo Stuti", "Bhasha", etc. are such poems. These poems are full of symbols and abstract images as well as abstruse and ambiguous. From the point of view of an ordinary reader these poems are difficult. The poet's following statement given in one of the poems of this collection, "Ishwar Agar

Maine Arbi Main Prarthana Ki", is true to some extent about these poems:

> This is not poetry
> But my diary
> (In its original form
> Not to be published
> Just conversation with myself........)

In these poems, his formalistic leaning are expressed prominently. The other type of the poems may be called the progressive poems. These poems deal with his social concerns and Marxist commitments. "Satyamev Jayate", "Akal" and "Aik Naya Gan Utha" are examples of such poems. These poems are concrete and transparent. Some poems, which are written about particular incidents, individual occasions and objects have qualities and tendencies of both the types of poems.

Shamsher Bahadur Singh is very alert about the craft of his poem. He has a keen senisitivity to sound, colour and form. The influences of modern western poetry and Urdu poetry have deepened this sensibility. In the poems of *Chuka bhi Hoon Nahin Main*, he has tried to integrate the arts of music, painting and sculpture with the art of poetry; and it may be said that he has succeeded to a great extent.

Har Dayal

1978 Award

Bharat Bhushan Agarwal

Utna Vah Sooraj Hai

National Prakashan, New Delhi; 1977; xii+112; Rs. 15.00

> "(The late) Sri Bharat Bhushan Agarwal, distinguished Hindi poet and translator, was born at Mathura in 1919. He passed his M.A. in English from the University of Agra and joined *Samaj Sevak*, a Hindi weekly from Calcutta, as its editor. Before

> joining the Sahitya Akademi as Assistant Secretary (later redesignated Deputy Secretary) in 1960, he served as Programme Officer at All India Radio for 12 years. One of the *Tar Saptak* pioneers of new poetry in Hindi, he has a number of books to his credit which include eight collections of poetry, two anthologies of his essays, a volume of short stories and a verse-play besides a number of translations from Bengali into Hindi. He was working on the 'Partition Theme in Indian Fiction' as a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, at the time of his untimely demise in 1975.
>
> *Utna Vah Sooraj Hai* is considered an outstanding contribution to Hindi literature for its mature sensibility, subtle irony, deep social concern and relentless self-search."

The poems of *Utna Vah Sooraj Hai* present the middle class view of contemporary day-to-day life and personal experience of an individual. There are natural contradictions in the poems, but they are not important. In some poems of this collection, the poet feels that life is meaningless and absurd, but it is very clear from some other poems that he loves life. He feels that man is insignificant in comparison to machine, but at the same time, he also feels that he can challenge it. The natural is more beautiful than the machine-made. He accepts the importance of common man. He is against war. He opposes the imposition of English language. In some of his poems, the poet has expressed his loneliness and has depicted the struggles of a lone man. He has the capacity to laugh at himself and at others. He has caricatured revolution, contemporary poets, and the neo-rich class and its manners. He has written some poems registering his reactions about particular occasions like death of important persons, the birth of Bangladesh, etc.

Twenty-eight poems of *Utna Vah Sooraj Hai*, are love poems. These poems depict the deep and intense feelings of love at both the physical and emotional levels. The poet feels that his beloved is known to him from some previous life. She is fresh, pure, uncany and unparalleled. She is a flame of fire. What he feels in love is both pleasure and pain. Love is like a flower and a wound. In "Ghaw" (The Wound) he says that love is not like a flower that blossoms spontaneously and fills with nectar and falls, but is like a lovely wound that is received by falling in a deep pit. In another poem

"Pyar Ek Phool Hai" (Love is flower) he says,

Love is a flower and flower is love
We–I and thou–are just two petals of it
The language that binds us is not our's
But flower's
This fragrance will last
When we shall be no more.

The poems of *Utna Vah Sooraj Hai* are simple and direct in expression and are written in an effective contemporary poetic idiom.

Har Dayal

KANNADA

1955 Award

'Kuvempu' (K.V. Puttappa)

Sri Ramayana Darsanam

Udayaravi Prakashan, Mysore; 1955; Vol. I&II, vi+867 pp.; Rs. 25.00

Kuvempu's *Sri Ramayana Darsanam*, in four volumes, is perhaps the best and the greatest poetical achievement of the present century. The entire work is an embodiment of the principles of Sarvodaya, Samanvaya and Purnadrsti which provide the master-key to a correct understanding of the epic. Rama, one in whom these principles are manifest, becomes revered, according to him, not because he vanquished the demon, but because he loved his dear wife–a unique attitude for a poet to dwell upon. The author is concerned more with the familiar events of day-to-day life than the eighteen descriptions which are galore in epical compositions. As a result, we find in this epic quite a number of such intimate and family relations as are rarely found in the epics of previous centuries. Also, for the first time in the history of Kannada epics, we have here a plethora of descriptions each one of which is natural, effective and moving, and is far away from the ornate, artificial and calculated descriptions that often mar our compositions.

The sentiments of the age and the values cherished have been assimilated into the characters. For example, Vasistha insists on the principle of Ahimsa even while celebrating the Putrakamesthi sacrifice. The author is not interested in the destructive mental make-up which was haunting the world at the time the epic was written (i.e. the Second World War) and continues to do so even now. He does not even hesitate to change the texture of the original epic if he could achieve this objective. One such instance is the episode of Lanka. Hanuman does not set it on fire because he is prevailed upon by the guarding spirit of Lanka (i.e. Lankalakshmi) not to do so. The much neglected and forlorn characters like Urmila, Manthara, etc. to cite a few, have received their due role and status

at the hands of this poet. Particularly, in his description of the earlier life of Manthara, the poet seems to have indicated that the exploitation of the downtrodden sections of the society by the upper classes endangers the very well-being of a nation sooner or later. As a result, this epic has become "not the mundane history that reflects the outward actions and incidents but the truest of true narrations which reflects the eternal truths."

In fact, it is our first secular epic. One must agree with what Kuvempu has stated: "The theory of incarnation, the theory of supernaturalism and religionism have no place in my epic. If at all they are there, at best they are suggested but not declared on the gong of the bell."

It is our good fortune that *Sri Ramayana Darsanam* goes beyond the scholars closet; it does not dwindle into a literary curiosity, but has been able to move the common reader, thus avoiding the pitfalls into which a later day epic would unwittingly succumb to. Its sweep and majesty, grandeur and master craftsmanship, the close to soil simplicity, and the grand similes offering an ever enchanting variety, make it a perfect work of art.

Pradhan Gurudatta

1956 Award

R.S. Mugali

Kannada Sahitya Charitre

Visha Sahitya Mala, Mysore; 1953; vii 394; Rs. 8.0.0

Kannada Sahitya Charitre is the first great effort to present a comprehensive history of Kannada literature. Based on poet-oriented divisions, there are five chapters in Mugali's *Kannada Sahiyta Charitre*. The first of these refers to the beginning of Kannada literature. The antiquity of Kannada literature has been discussed here with evidence.

The second chapter is a short account of the literary works and poets who existed before Pampa, including Asaga, Gunavarma I, etc., and about *Kavirajamarga* and *Vaddaradhane*, the first work on poetics and the first prose work in Kannada respectively.

The third chapter refers to the Pampa age. The beginning of this age is regarded as the golden age of Kannada literature. Biographical sketches of several famous poets and authors of scientific works as well as criticisms of literary works are found here in details.

The fourth chapter refers to the Basava age which was the age of popular literature, and deals with the literary works composed in large number by the Virasaiva mystic poets and Vacanakaras like Allama and Basava, as also other Jaina, Brahmana and Virasaiva poets. The background of their literary trends, the biograpical sketches of a few of them and also the critical estimate of some of the literary compositions have been aptly expounded.

The fifth and the last chapter entitled "Kumaravyasa Yuga" deals with the history of poets and their works from the Brahmana poet Kumaravyasa (1400 A.D.) up to Muddana (1900 A.D.). This chapter closes with an essay on the significant features of Kannada literature.

More than the details about the date, place, etc. of poets, the stress is mainly on the critical analysis of the literary compositions and the place the poets and their literary works have in literature as a whole. The criticism catching the essence and good qualities, the profound yet pleasing style of presenting the subject have enhanced the value of this work.

T.V. Venkatachala Sastry

1958 Award

Dattatreya Ramachandra Bendre

Aralu-Maralu

Samaja Pustakalaya, Dharwar; 1957; xxii+508 pp.; Rs. 7.00

"Sri Dattatreya Ramachandra Bendre alias 'Ambikatanaya Datta' (b. 1896 in Dharwar) is a distinguished poet and dramatist."

Aralu-Maralu is a collection of 273 lyrics, inclusive of some translations and adaptations. The poems are grouped into five sections–'The Heart-Sea', 'The Liberated Voice', 'The Temple of Meditation,' 'The Wave of Life' and 'The Drink of Light'. It is a representative volume

in the sense that it illustrates the chief characteristics of Bendre's Poetry formal as well as thematic.

Bendre has been recognised as a singer *par excellence* and hailed as the inspired snake-charmer. His attitude towards sound is not only physical but also meta-physical. Sound, according to him, is the source of all creation and the means of poetic apprehension. The sheer wealth of prosodic forms employed here, ranging from the Vedic and classical metres to folk tunes and free verse, is a testimony to the poet's virtuosity in the manipulation of sonal patterns. Similarly, the vocabulary extends from racy colloquial words to learned Sanskritic compounds.

Variety, again, characterises the imagery of these poems, at both the configurative and functional levels. There is freshness of apprehension, precision of detail, concreteness of presentation, extension from the objects of nature to the creations of man and, above all, the gradual or sudden transition from the physical to the mystical. Traditional symbols are used without self-consciousness and new images are invested with symbolic values. "Belaku", "Bili Kanigale" and "O Tayi-Mayi" are instances in point.

Love of nature, the mystery of life and the divine direction of the universe are the dominant themes of these poems. There are some on other topics too, but the volume primarily embodies the quest of a mystic and the vision of a seer. It is a vision of cosmic harmony and love, infusing the poet with the spirit of affirmation and hope, a vision that gives the poems their abiding value.

N. Balasubrahmanya

1959 Award

K.S. Karanth

Yakshagana Bayalata

Harsha Mudrana Prakashanalayan, Patturu; 1957; viii+283 pp.

"Sri K.S. Karanth. (b. 1902 in Kota South Kanara) is a novelist, and dramatist whose versatility has covered a wide range, from

composition of operas to compiling an encyclopaedia for children and a Kannada-Kannada lexicon."

Yakshagana is the premier folk theatre of Karnataka and *Yakshagana Bayalata* is a product of Karanth's mature reflection on this art. It delves deep into the development and growth of this form, its aesthetics and performance aspects, its creative range and depth in comparison with sister arts, besides an examination of the lives and works of the rural playwrights or *prasangakartas*.

Karanth introduces the art to his readers in a general way indicating the cultural background and covers a wide area of Yakshagana performances, an account of the performing troupes of the region, and the limitations and possibilities of the total theatre aspect. He argues that the simple folk music of Yakshagana songs evokes emotions better than classical music. Karanth brings to relief the folk origin and rejects the theory of any classical base for this art although *Sabhalakshana*, a treatise on Yakshagana, prescribed the prologue and fixes its parameters. It also yields an insight into the origin of these plays as a form of worship of Vishnu in his ten *avatars*. Karanth holds that the tradition of Yakshagana is not a borrowed one, although it may have common elements with other South Indian dance drama forms. He also examines *Sabhalakshana*. The chapter on the music of Yakshagana contains Karanth's most valuable contribution not only to Yakshagana but to the realm of Indian non-classical or folk musicology. Based as his conclusions are on extensive research and seminars with practising Bhagwaths (musicians), this part of the book forms the core of Kararth's thesis. Folk music was born along with words and their connected emotive nuances, just as for example, in Surdas and Kabir. It is only later that the specialists and classicists arrived on the scene to dissociate *raga* and *tala* from the meaning of the songs. Karanth vehemently criticises Vachika of Yakshagana in recent time, when dialogues have degenerated into scholarly monologues and speech relegated dance and music to the back seat–something unpardonable according to Karanth. The fantastic costumes of Yakshagana are investigated with considerable skill while suggestions are made to fill the lacunae in women's costuming. Puppetry of Yakshagana is also examined briefly.

The second part deals with the Yakshagana poets or playwrights ranging from sixteenth to early twentieth century. In an appendix to this part the dates of many *prasangas* are fixed with the aid of the Indian Ephemery.

The style of the book is terse and brief. *Yakshagana Bayalata* is the most seminal and also functional work on this art form by an author who possesses abundant courage of his convictions. As a scholarly investigation and also as a guide for performers, the work remains unparalleled.

K.S. Haridasa Bhat

1960 Award

'Vinayaka' (V.K. Gokak)

Dyava Prithvi

Paraga Prakashan, Dharwad; 1957; iv+76; Rs. 2.50

> "Sri V.K. Gokak alias Vinayaka (b. 1909) is a distinguished poet, playwright and critic. *Dyava Prithvi*, which literally means 'The Sky and the Earth', is a collection of two long poems *Nirada* and *Ilagita*. The first is a symbolic picture of the cloud as viewed from the earth, and the second an equally symbolic view of the earth as seen from the sky. The two poems together present the poet's conception of man's evolution and his future. The grandeur of the poet's vision and its lyrical expression make this work a significant contribution to contemporary Kannada poetry."

Dyava Prithvi is the tenth collection of V.K. Gokak's poems, and the title which literally means 'Sky Earth', sums up the content and intent of the work. While at one level, the work may be seen as a collection of independent lyrical pieces, arranged in two sections, at a more profound level, it displays an essential thematic continuity and unity.

The first section, 'Neerada' (Silence), contains ten pieces of unequal length, and the lyrics flow in fluent but irregular blank verse. The

second section, 'Ila Geeta', contains eleven lyrics, also of unequal length and in equally smooth-flowing prosody. The literal meaning of 'Ila Geeta' is the "Song of the Earth." The central theme of the work is an integral view of life in which dualities and multiplicities of the human condition are transcended within the framework of that condition. As the appended notes testify, the poem shows traces of the main influences that have been shaping Gokak's distinguished poetic career–Kalidasa, Shelley (who is even mentioned in one of the poems), Eliot, the French romantic decadents, and, above all, Aurobindo. But the diverse streams of influence have been transmuted into a distinctive Indian flavour of transcendental humanism and complex monism. The duality between the physical-earthly (Prithvi) and the transcendental-divine (Dyava) is negated through a series of highly romantic and imagistic lyrics, which demonstrate the continuity and unity between the two divided domains. As Bendre shrewdly points out in his brief Foreword, Gokak draws heavily on Aurobindo's integral Yoga philosophy in knitting together the diverse components of the reality that he recognises. In the first section, the human consciousness is shown to be striving towards the transcendental, the cloud-crowded sky above. This represents an upward look. In the second section, the poet takes a downward look, apparently from the sky, but, this is the centre of its vision, paradoxically the downward look from the sky is also a look from below, from this earth where we are, unavoidably trapped. The paradox is explicated and transcended through the poet's belief in divine grace, but a grace that is structurally rooted in earthly effort. The poem achieves an astonishing equipoise, emerging out of the complex dualities and contradictions. In technique, Gokak combines the symbolism of the European romantics with a very Indian mythological mode. Strewn in the collection are striking images–of our corrupt urban modern life, and of the sea-blue sky. Both in theme and technique, the collection demonstrates great skill and mastery, and it is certainly one of the key landmarks in the landscape of modern Kannada poetry.

K. Raghavendra Rao

1961 Award

A.R. Krishnasastri

Bangali Kadambarikara Bankimchandra

University of Mysore, Mysore; 1960; xxvii+500; Rs. 8.00

"Dr. A.R. Krishnasastri (b. 1890) is a distinguished critic and scholar of Karanataka. *Bangali Kadambarikara Bankimchandra* is a comprehensive biographical and critical study of the Bengali novelist Bankimchandra Chatterjee. The author who knows Bengali well has not only made an original and significant contribution to literary criticism but has carefully analysed and assessed Bankimchandra's influence on modern Kannada novel and literature."

Bangali Kadambarikara Bankimchandra is undoubtedly one of the very few outstanding works in the genre of biographical writing in Kannada. Running into 500 pages the book is fittingly dedicated to the memory of B. Venkatacharya who introduced Bankim to the reading public in Karnataka. Appropriately the text of the book is preceded by a Kannada version of *Bankimchandra*, a tribute written by Rabindranath Tagore.

Divided into thirty chapters, the first two chapters give a brief account of the history of Bengali literature and the life of Bankim. The remaining chapters are devoted to a detailed, informative and critically appreciative assessment of the entire works of Bankim, viz., poems, Bankim's first novel in English *Raj Mohan's Wife*, social novels, historical novels, Seetharama journals and periodicals, articles in lighter vein collected under the titles *Lokarahasya, Kamalakanta*, biography of Muchiramaguda, religious books and articles highlighting the critical and human approach of Bankim in his study of the *Life of Sri Krishna*, religious doctrines, *Divine Principle* and *Divinity*, a critique *Bhagavadgita* writings in English, essays written for *Banga Darshan* and *Prachara*, periodicals edited by himself, and other minor articles.

It would be a mistake to consider Bankim merely as a novelist, though he is familiar to most of us as such. The book throws considerable light on the multifaceted personality of Bankim not

only as a creative artist, but also as a patriot, a social reformer, a humorist and a satirist and, above all, an embodiment of the true cultural values enshrined in the sacred books of India, such as the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata*.

In this critical treatment of the novels of Bankim, A.R. Krishnasastri first gives a summary of the novel, and then proceeds to examine them. Wherever Bankim is indebted to an English author, the author gives us a comparative estimate of both. On the whole, the critical analysis and evaluation of the novels are a marvel of brevity and balanced judgement. It is said that Bengali scholars who came to know about this unique biography from knowledgeable Kannada scholars opined that even Bengali could not boast of such an outstanding work on Bankim.

M.V. Seetha Ramiah

1962 Award

Devudu (Narasimha Sastri)

Mahakshatriya

Manohara Grantha Prakashana; 1963 (Second Edition); 195 pp.; Rs. 4.00

> "Sri Devudu (Narasimha Sastri) (1896-1962) was a distinguished Kannada novelist and writer who unfortunately passed away last year at the age of 66. A man of versatile talent and dedicated spirit, Sri Devudu's interests covered a wide range–Literature, Philosophy, Education, Journalism, Fine Arts and the Theatre. The award book, *Mahakshatriya*, is a novel and forms part of a trilogy written by the author to re-interpret the Indian mythology. It deals with the episode of Indra-Vritta struggle and is a masterly work of interpretational fiction characterised by a symbolic significance for the modern times."

Mahakshatriya, along with *Maha Brahmana* and *Maha Darsana*, is one of the three novels of Devudu which explores the universal significance of myths and legends.

Mahakshatriya depicts the life and adventures of King Nahusa who was selected to be the monarch of the heaven in the absence of Indra. According to legend, Nahusa's fall–he becomes a python and goes to the nether world–is a result of his pride and his unholy desire for Sachi, the wife of Indra. In Devudu's novel, on the other hand, Nahusa's fall is a voluntary act and a noble gesture of self-sacrifice. The ennobling of the protagonist is not due to the sentimentality of the influence of the New Humanism, but it is a result of Devudu's competent interpretation of mythology. Nahusa is a complete human being, so complete that he can wait for ages to become Indra in the next Kalpa.

What is significant in the novel is not only the metamorphosis of Nahusa, but also the profound delineation of the other characters and the rendering of abstract themes and concepts in terms of powerful images. The consciousness of the characters is not psychological but mythical; the characters are aware of the limitations of their destiny. The killing of *Vrtra*, the deposition of Indra, and Indra hiding himself in the stalk of lotus are scenes of cosmic mystery. The novel presents a complete cosmology of gods and human beings, governed by the principle of *Rata*. In short, it is the only prose classic in modern Kannada; a work which, drawing its strength from the past, has opened up a new world of significance.

K.D. Kurtkoti

1964 Award

B. Puttasamaya

Kranti Kalyana

Sarada Prakatanalaya, Bangalore; 1963; 555 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"A distinguished Kannada dramatist and novelist, Sri Puttasamaya (b. 1897) started his writing career as a journalist and was associated with a number of popular periodicals of the day. Later, in his thirties, he wrote plays for the stage which are deemed to have made a distinct contribution to Kannada drama. Two of his well known plays, *Kurukshetra* and *Dasha-*

vatara, were popular on the Kannada stage for more than two decades. After his fiftieth year, Sri Puttasamaya turned his virile pen to novel-writing and immediately made his mark with his social novels, *Abhisarike* and *Sudhamayi*, both written in 1954.

In 1958 was published his historical novel, *Udaya Ravi*, first of a series of six novels depicting the saga of Basavesvara and Bijjala of the Chalukya period of Indian history. The Award book *Kranti Kalyana* is the sixth and the last volume of this series. For its imaginative treatment of the plot and its colourful portrayal of the times, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

Kranti Kalyana is the last of the five-novel series dealing with revolutionary events in the life of Sri Basavesvara, and his socio-historical milieu. Although this great reformer flourished in as late as the 12th century A.D., a great deal of myth and legend has surprisingly gathered around his name. Popularly known as Basavanna, Sri Basavesvara held high office in the court of Bijjala, the Chalukyan ruler. It was he who reorganized Virasaivism, even if, as many of his followers claim, he was not its founder. This dynamic faith was a daring attempt at bringing under the same fold all the devotees of Lord Siva, irrespective of caste or creed, sex or social status. It is not surprising, considering the historical context, that it should have disturbed the minds of the entrenched high castes, and, possibly, even of the lowest strata, used, for centuries, to their inferior status. The inevitable explosion came when Basavanna blessed the marriage of a *pariah* youth with a brahmin girl, which eventually led to a cruel sentence being passed by the ruler on the parents of the boy as well as of the girl. It is popularly believed that Bijjala was beheaded by Basavanna's followers. Shocked at these grim developments, Basavanna, essentially a religious mystic and an apostle of non-violence, left in great agony the capital city of Kalyana.

Endowed with the artist's imagination and the historian's objectivity, the author has succeeded not only in seeing into the hearts of men and discerning their motives, but in seeing in proper perspective the upsurge of a new religion as well as the stirring events of a whole society and a powerful kingdom. By making bold departures from certain cherished traditions (as, for instance, in making Basavanna quit Kalyana before the ruler's assassination), he has shaken many

a common belief. With his penetrating insight he has sifted fact from fiction, history from myth, and religion from fanaticism, and has succeeded in creating a charming work of art out of a very slender store of historical material. His description of the plots and counter-plots involved in the power politics of the period is charged with drama and his characters throb with life. His narrative is racy and vigorous, and his language, graceful and elegant. In short, the novelist transports the reader into the very vortex of the turmoil and makes him at once an interested participant and a disinterested spectator. Above all, by subordinating history and sociology to the exacting standards of literary creation, he has revealed the true artist's sense of propriety.

Prabhu Shankara

1965 Award

S.V. Ranganna

Ranga Binnapa

Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore; 1963; xix+603 pp.; Rs. 15.00 (Paperback), Rs. 20.00 (Hard bound)

"Sri S.V. Rangana (b. 1898) is a distinguished scholar, critic and poet in Kannada. After a brilliant career at school and college where he was always the best student of the year and received several merit scholarships and prizes. Sri Ranganna became a lecturer in English Literature and rose to be Senior Professor and Head of the Department of English Literature, University of Mysore, from where he retired in 1954. Since then he has devoted himself entirely to literary and scholarly pursuits and is equally at home in Kannada and English, in both of which languages he has produced a number of scholarly essays and monographs. As early as 1925 he made his mark in Kannada for his reflective and descriptive lyrical pieces in free verse and prose. He has also published elaborate critical estimates of Kalidasa's plays and of Kannada poets.

The award book, *Ranga Binnapa*, is a collection of his reflective and epigrammatic literary pieces in the style of *Vachana*,

> an established and much admired literary genre in Kannada. These pieces, full of deep thought and wisdom, are in the nature of poetic musings and philosophical utterances on the value and meaning of life in general. For their rich thought-content and their exquisite expression, they have been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

Vachana literature is the priceless and peerless heritage of all Kannadigas bequeathed to them by Basava (12th century) and his contemporaries. S.V. Ranganna has summed up in his preface to *Ranga Binnapa*, the distinctive features of this unique form of literature. These are the novel structure, style and beauty of the *Vachanas*; the utter simplicity of the words and phrases used in them; the resonance, rapid flight and range of their sentences; alliteration and abundance of questions raised, etc.

These influenced his mind so profoundly that nearly four decades ago a couple of *Vachanas* of his own found effortless expression in a train as specimens of 'un-premeditated art'. Thereafter, he became the pioneer in the field of reviving, revitalizing and restructuring the *Vachana* form to make it an appropriate vehicle for conveying the convolutions, complexities and contradictions inherent in present-day society.

The outcome of his bold new experiment is this outstanding collection of more than twelve hundred *Vachanas* covering nearly three hundred diverse topics and displaying fully the author's eclectic genius and his lyrical, narrative, descriptive and elucidative powers. The sprinkling of puns, epigrams, anecdotes, myths and legends here and there have enhanced the overall effectiveness of these inspired utterances.

The author's belief that there is only one appropriate bridegroom of word for every bride of meaning, has led him to choose his words most carefully. "Let us not surrender our hearts to the Menaka of words; let us kneel before the Gowri of meaning", is his exhortation. But, there are occasions when the Menaka of words has apparently overpowered him in spite of this ascetic vow.

The author's earnest endeavour in these sparkling *Vachanas* appears to be to find as many pages of this concealed part of the book of life as possible. It is a significant endeavour yielding some satisfying

results. What more can an author aspire for and achieve in his creative writing?

Siddayya Puranik

1966 Award

P.T. Narasimhachar

Hamsa Damayanti Mattu Itara Rupakagalu

Sharada Mandira, Mysore; 1965; xiv+331 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri P.T. Narasimhachar (b. 1905) distinguished poet and playwright was born at Melkote, a religious place in Mandya district in the state of Mysore. Sri Narasimhachar received his early education at the local middle school. Later he graduated from Maharaja's College in Mysore in 1926, and in the same year entered Government service as a stenographer. Later he worked as Editor of Debates in the Mysore Legislature Secretariat. Having retired in 1961, he is now engaged in editing the English-Kannada Dictionary at the University of Mysore.

Sri Narasimhachar entered the literary field as a poet in his early youth and has by now a number of collections to his credit, besides operas, verse-plays, essays, short stories and sketches. He has also produced verse translation of several Sanskrit classics into Kannada. He has presided over several poets' gathering and received the State Akademi Award in 1966.

The Award book, *Hamsa Damayanti Mattu Itara Rupakagalu*, is a collection of eight musical plays, four of which are based on famous epics. The remaining four centre round the four seasons. For their charming composition and graceful rhythm as well as for their exquisite poetry, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

Hamsa Damayanti Mattu Itara Rupakagalu is a collection of eight musical plays, four of which are based on famous epics. These plays are unique in the field of drama and poetry.

The lyrical plays of P.T. Narasimhachar are a harmonious blend of music, poetry and action. The essential quality of drama is carried on in the lyric dialogue set to music. The greatness of these lyric plays is two-fold. The lyrics, by themselves are great as poetry. They lend themselves to such fine musical patterns and modes (*ragas*) that the music and lyric appear to be created at the same moment. In the eight lyric plays in this volume, we have three episodes from the *Ramayana*–the birth of Rama, Rama's marriage with Sita and the episode of the Golden Deer. One episode from the *Mahabharata* is that of the swan bringing together King Nala and Damayanti.

The other four are pure creations on the various moods of Nature, the grandeur of the festival of lights–Deepalakshmi, the glories of spring–Vasantachandana, the magnificence of the rainy season–Varsha Harsha and the supreme beauty of the Sharadruthu–Sharadvilasa. Each lyric in these plays stands as pure poetry but mingles to form a harmony of action. In musical balance each one is like a perfect *swara* (note) but blending into a perfect *raga* (mode). This brings to us the finest quality of the lyrical plays. A great Veena master like 'Padmabhusan' Dr. V. Duraiswamy Iyengar has spoken in superlative praise of the musical quality of the lyric plays. He avers that Narasimhachar is a great innovator as he has created quite a number of new *ragas*–almost twenty-five new *ragas*. These are entirely new but based on classical Karnataka music. A few are based on folk music as in Harsha Varsha and Sharadvilasa. Some of these are pure classical *ragas* that delight the lovers of traditional music. Some of the *ragas* based on the pure classical system have given a new life to the *raga* itself. Thus lyrical plays are very significant contribution to the world of music. Some of the new *ragas* are Vaasanthi, Sanjeevini, Harini, Rituvilasa, Rishabha Vilasa, Gandhara Dola and a few still unnamed *ragas*. Here and there Narasimhachar has used Hindustani classical tunes with a few alliteration of the *swaras*. This undoubtedly the great contribution of Narasimhachar to the realm of literature–this new genre of lyric plays where music and poetry are inseparably united. "Hamsa Damayanti" and the other seven lyric plays in this volume are the best in this genre.

S. Anantha Nara

1967 Award

D.V. Gundappa

Shrimadbhagavadgitatatparya Athava Jivanadharmayoga

Kavyalaya Publisher, Mysore; 1966; 768 pp.; Rs. 18.00

"Dr. D.V. Gundappa (b. 1889) is a distinguished author, scholar and public worker. Dr. Gundappa has been active in many fields of cultural and intellectual activity, and was one of the founders in 1945 of the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, Bangalore, which he has since served as its Honorary Secretary and editor of its monthly journal *Public Affairs*. He has been associated with the Mysore University and the Kannada Sahitya Parishat and presided over the Kannada Literary Conference at Mercara in 1932.

Dr. Gundappa is a versatile writer, highly esteemed for his essays remarkable for their originality of thought and lucidity of expression, for his biographies of Gokhale and Rangacharlu deemed models of their kind, and for his admirable translations of *Macbeth* and *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. He has also published an operatic version of Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Sakuntalam*.

The Award book, *Shrimadbhagavadgitatatparya Athava Jivanadharmayoga* is a collection of essays on the thought and philosophy of the *Gita*, originally delivered as lectures at the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, Bangalore. For its modern interpretation of abiding moral values, for profundity of analysis and a lucid and charming prose style it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

Shrimadbhagavadgitatatparya Athava Jivanadharmayoga (Gospel for a Good Life) is a compendium of discourses on the *Gita*, containing in addition the original text with summaries of his lectures in Kannada verse on each chapter.

An eminent scholar, a great thinker, a man of wide experience and a front-ranking Kannada writer, Sri Gundappa has shed new light on the *Gita* in these discourses. He has done this not by diverging from traditional interpretations but by shifting their emphasis on renunciation and final release to the positive concept of an active world-bettering life. For him, the *Gita* is as much a Dharma Sastra (Gospel of Duties) as it is a Moksha Sastra (Gospel of Final Release), and is addressed not merely to recluses but also to men with a spiritual urge for active worldly life.

Thus Dharma and Karma form the most interesting topics dealt with by the author. Dharma, according to him, is the code which so guides a man in his life that neither is the world disturbed by his interference nor is he soiled by his contact with it. It expresses itself in three ways: *Naija* (Nature), *Nyaya* (Justice), and *Maithri* (Amity). The gifts of nature must be fully cultivated and utilized for the development of the individual, but should be so tempered by justice as not to cause harm to similar development of other individuals. *Maithri* is the spirit which makes the whole world one's kin. The *Gita* calls this *Atmoupamya,* treating others as your own self. Accepting the world as a noble creation and beautiful gift of the Lord and acting in it as ever under the eyes of the All-Seeing and offering all your actions and their fruits to it is Karma Yoga. Thus ordaining one's life, one need not worry about Moksha, the Final Release, for it falls into his lap like a ripe fruit.

This is a rare book to be read by all who want to live a full and useful life here and now.

P.T. Narasimhachar

1968 Award

Srinivasa (Masti Venkatesa Iyengar)

Sanna Kathegalu

Jivana Karyalaya, Bangalore; Vol. 1965; 73 pp.; Rs. 1.25

"Srinivasa (Sri Masti Venkatesa Iyengár) (b. 1891) is a distinguished author, short story writer, novelist, poet and critic.

Born in Masti, a village in Mysore State, by which name he is popularly known, he did his B.A. and M.A. at Madras University and joined the Mysore Civil Service where he held many important posts with distinction.

Author of over 60 works, there is hardly a single literary form in Kannada which Sri Masti has not enriched with his prolific pen, but he shines out best as a story-teller. To him goes the credit of establishing firmly the form of short story in Kannada, his first collection having been published half a century ago. Sri Masti's works, whether short stories, poems, or plays, breathe a warm humanity, upholding the very best in Indian culture and tradition. Well known among his works are the novelette, *Subbanna*; the story-poems, *Navaratri*; two novels, *Channa Basava Nayaka* and *Chicka Virarajendra*; *Kakana Kote*, a play which continues its hold over the new generation. He also edited and published a literary monthly, *Jivana*, for 25 years.

The Award book, *Sanna Kathegalu* (Vols. 12 & 13), consists of fifteen stories, their themes covering a wide range and bearing the hall-mark of Sri Masti's genius. For its simple and homely speech, gentle and graceful style, its deep insight into character and sympathetic understanding of human nature, the book has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

Masti is one of the fore-runners of the Kannada Renaissance. He is the founder of a tradition. There are a few who wrote short stories prior to Masti. But Masti's achievement has overshadowed them and he has been described as the 'Father of Short Stories' in the history of Kannada literature. It would be no exaggeration to say that we do not come across any short story writer in Kannada who has not come under the influence of Masti in one way or another. Masti's art of short-story writing is simple and direct and free from emotions, but his deep interest in life appeals to readers. By his very narration, Masti attracts the reader; he makes the story a part and parcel of life itself. As was rightly pointed out by a critic several decades ago, 'tender subject' and 'delicate manner of presentation' were, till his last days, the stable characteristics of his short stories.

The world of Masti's short stories is big and varied. The present collection *Sanna Kathegalu* is no exception. These stories are not

only contemporaneous, but also dwell into history and mythology. They extend their territories to Egypt, Rome, Mexico, England, Moscow and other places in the world. Anne, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Waltair, Isadora Duncan, Plutarch and others figure in his stories. Sri Krishna, Kuchela, Vasistha, Vishwamitra and other mythological personalities are also found here. Personalities like Nash-huwell Koyotel, Hatshopsitu with whom we are not familiar, and unknown personalities like Chattekara Tayi are also to be found in this world of short stories.

The simple and direct art of his narration carries with it a tinge of the didactic. But his art so predominates as to make us forget his moral purpose. Actually the nine stories in *Sanna Kathegalu* are modern fables. We do not find in these short stories any technical acrobatics; the technique reminds us of folk-tales. Here it is simplicity which is transformed into art. We find here life and its problems, powerfully depicted. The imagination and ingenuity of the story writer in creating a central situation and other details is unparalleled.

Among the fifteen stories in this collection, three stories namely, "Tolstoy Maharsiya Bhurja Vrksagalu" (The Birch Trees of Tolstoy, the Sage), "Vicitra Prema" (Strange Love) and "Iruvegala Loka" (The World of Ants) rank not only among the best stories of Masti, but also among the best in the field of Kannada short stories. The first one, a touching story, is undoubtedly the best. In every one of these stories we find a heart that craves for humanity. Rarely do we come across writers who view life with sympathy. Only those who have led a 'full-life' can attain this 'vision of life'. Masti sucked the best of our culture; he also responded to the spirit of the age. We find their confluence in these short stories.

H.M. Nayak

1969 Award

H. Tipperudra Swamy

Karnataka Samskriti Sameekshe

D.V.K. Murthy, Mysore; 1968; viii+817; Rs. 30.00

"Sri H. Tipperudra Swamy (b. 1923) is a distinguished author and scholar. Born at Honnali in the Shimoga district of Mysore

State, Sri Tipperudra Swamy received his higher education at the University of Mysore. Always one of the best students of his class he received a number of medals and prizes during his educational career and received the degree of Master of Kannada Literature in 1952. In 1960, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for his research work in Kannada literature. At present he is working with the Institute of Kannada Studies, Mysore.

Endowed with a prolific pen, Dr. Tipperudra Swamy has written profusely and has already published more than twenty works which include novels, short stories, poems, plays, critical studies and edited works besides a biography.

The Award book, *Karnataka Samskriti Sameekshe*, is his latest work which is a survey of the cultural aspects of life in the Karnatak region. For its painstaking research and collection of valuable data and for its clarity of treatment and exposition, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

The multi-faceted culture of Karnataka has been attracting scholars from the time of John Faithful Fleet and many are the savants who have written on one or the other aspect of this culture. Thus a large number of monographs have been written by competent scholars on Karnataka culture. The book under review is different from all of its predecessors because it encompasses all aspects of Karnataka, namely, history, folklore, epigraphy, literature, architecture, sculpture, fine arts, music, and the like. In short the learned author has reviewed the achievements of Karnataka in all the cultural fields and this makes this prestigious publication a comprehensive reference work on Karnataka.

Divided into ten sections, the first one provides a useful background of Indian culture. The second section is devoted to the study of the dynastic history of Karnataka, right from the time of the pre-historic period to the present. Karnataka had attained a significance of its own as early as the fourth century B.C. and with the help of dynasties like the Kadambas, Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Sevunas, Vijayanagara, Keladi and Mysore Odeyars maintained this uniqueness. Administration, religion, society and education are reviewed in the third section. One is impressed by the religious harmony and tolerance that was exhibited by the people of Karnataka. Perhaps

no part of India can boast of the epigraphical wealth as Karnataka and this wealth has been studied in great detail in the fourth section.

The literary output in Kannada from the time of Halmidi epigraph and of Kavirajamarga is as impressive as it is varied. Poetry, prosc, drama, *champu*, *vachanas*, textual criticism, technical literature, produced by a galaxy of writers like Pampa, Ranna, Ponna, Lakshmisa, Basavanna, Akkamahadevi, Sarvajna and others have been discussed in the fifth section. It is followed by a section on folk literature representing the culture of Karnataka in its nascent stage. No facet of active life was left untouched by the simplicity of the folk artist of Karnataka.

The major contribution of Karnataka is in the field of architecture and sculpture, as represented by a new school known as Vesara of Chalukyan. It is here in Aihole, Pattadakal and Badami, that architects from all over India joined hands to produce monuments of north, south and Chalukya schools, a spectacle both thrilling and rare. The free standing collossal image of Gommatesvara, the world's tallest statue, the Gol Gumbaz considered to be an engineering marvel, the goldsmith's intricate carving at Halebid are dealt in the seventh chapter, followed by music and dance for which Karnataka is justly famous. Lastly, the painting of Karnataka has been reviewed followed by an epilogue where the author has estimated the part played by Karnataka culture in the development of the personality of India.

It is lucidly written and authoritative and is, without exception the only work which deals with the culture of Karnataka in all its aspects. The author deserves the appreciation of all interested in Indian culture and Kannada culture.

A.V. Narasimha Murthy

1971 Award

Adya Rangacharya

Kalidasa

Usha Sahitya Male, Mysore; 1970; viii+192 pp.; Rs. 8.00 (Paperback), Rs. 10.00 (Hard bound)

"Sri Adya Rangacharya (b. 1904), born at Agarkhed (Dist. Bijapur), was educated at Bombay and London Universities.

He has devoted his entire life to the development of Kannada and Indian theatre. He has published 34 full-length plays besides two collections of one-act plays in Kannada. He has received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for play-writing and has also been elected as its Fellow. The President of India has conferred on him the title of Padmabhushan this year.

Sri Rangacharya has also contributed to the field of literary criticism and scholarship. He is at present Chairman of the Mysore State Sahitya Academy.

The Award book, *Kalidasa*, is a critical study of the poetry and drama of the great Sanskrit poet in the context of his age and society. For its freshness of outlook and lucidity of treatment, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

Though there are numerous studies of this Sanskrit master-poet in almost all the modern languages, what makes the present monograph outstanding is its modernity of approach punctuated by happy insights, always documented by references to pertinent passages in the original poems and plays of Kalidasa. The author who is a playwright of standing in the modern Kannada literary scene, presents his study in an engaging and forceful prose which is at once direct, striking and sparkling. These merits make it a very readable contribution to Kannada literary criticism.

Usually, Kalidasa has been subjected by academic scholars to meticulous research for over a century. But all the voluminous research publications have not yielded any firm conclusions about Kalidasa's place, date or literary objectives. As against the view that Kalidasa was a traditionalist, Adya Rangacharya argues very brilliantly from internal evidence that Kalidasa was a reformist who reacted against the decadent features of monarchy in his time and presented the ancient ideals of kingship in a new way by recapturing the past glory of an ancient epic age. He argues that Kalidasa was not a votary of worldly love as commonly thought, but a subtle critic of royal voluptuousness masquerading as love. His revealing analysis of all the plays and poems reinforce these new conclusions. It emerges that Kalidasa's art reaches its highest in *Shakuntala*, since his criticism of life here is most adequate, while it is partly indicated in the earlier works. The epilogue of this play is regarded as the author's cry of despair and disappointment with reality instead of being taken

as a pious wish for salvation. Against this background, it is suggested that Kalidasa might have lived in the time of Skandagupta, voicing forth his disapproval of the corrupt morals of Chandragupta II.

K. Krishnamoorthy

1972 Award

S.S. Bhoosnurmath

Shoonya Sampadaneya Paramarshe

Shri Swamiji of Ravuru; 1969; ix+995; Rs. 16.00 (Paperback), Rs. 25.00 (Hard bound)

> "Prof. S.S. Bhoosnurmath (b. 1911) was born at Nidagundi in the district of Dharwar. He obtained his Master's degree from the Bombay University, and then worked as Lecturer and Professor of Kannada for 25 years. Later he became a Professor of Veerashaiva Literature and Philosophy at the Karnatak University where he is, at present, a U.G.C. Professor.
>
> Noted for his profound scholarship and painstaking research, Prof. Bhoosnurmath has by now published 10 books which include commentaries, edited works and translations. One of his books has won the Mysore State Sahitya Akademi Award in 1969.
>
> The Award book, *Shoonya Sampadaneya Paramarshe*, is an interpretative study of the well known philosophical classic of Veershaiva literature. For its masterly exposition and subtlety of expression, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

The original *Sunya Sampadane* (15th century) is a classic anthology of *vachanas*–short pithy sayings, prose in form but poetic in spirit–widely used as the medium of éxpression by Sivasaranas or mystic saints of Karnataka in the 12th century. Dramatically knit in dialogue form, it propagates the right way of life among the masses.

In their literature, the work *Sunya* is used in the positive sense of realization of the Godhead, and its ineffable experience, and does not have any nihilistic connotation.

The very title of the work, *Shoonya Sampadaneya Paramarshe* apparently paradoxical, has a rich mystical significance. It is a great work which, while unravelling the riddle of life, introduces also the remarkable incidents in the lives of the saints. Hence its unceasing appeal to literary critics as well as religious seekers.

The profundity of a classic opens itself to infinite possibilities of interpretation. Bhoosnurmath's *Shoonya Sampadaneya Paramarshe*, or critical study of *Sunya Sampadane* unravels the literal and suggestive significances of the work, expounds its spiritual values and highlights the rich experience of the *Saranas* referred to. Proceeding step by step, it attempts to examine modern life experiences with the touchstone of *Saranas* with a view to assessing its veracity and this is the characteristic structure of the present scholarly study. This appreciation is reinforced by a survey of many a metaphysical treatise in the East and West including the latest scientific thoughts of our time. This reveals the author's catholicity of outlook, and vast range of investigation. It reaches heights of grandeur in thought which makes this work a landmark in Kannada philosophic writing today.

The presentation of the subject, conversational intimacy with the reader, the store of homely examples drawn from common life-experience, sustain the reader's interest. Distilling the essence of *vachanas* after personally assimilating it, in the language enriched by experience, is the method adopted here. The author's vast reading, reflection, and assimilation of ideas end up in a personal philosophy, which, in a way, presents a challenge to critics.

Chennaveera Kanavi

1973 Award

V. Sitaramiah

Aralu Baralu

India Book House, Bangalore; 1972; 38+144 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"Sri Vi.Si. (V. Sitaramaiah) (b. 1899) was born and educated at Bangalore. He received his M.A. degree in Economics and

Political Science in 1922. A teacher by profession, he retired as Assistant Professor in 1955. He later worked as a Producer in All India Radio and Principal of Arts and Science College, Honavara. A devoted lover of literature and philosophy, Sri Sitaramiah has been actively associated with a number of literary cultural associations, including the Sahitya Akademi and Bharatiya Jnanpith. He has more than fifty published works in Kannada and English to his credit.

The Award book, *Aralu Baralu*, is the latest collection of his poems, first published in 1972. For its rich variety of themes and maturity of creative expression, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kannada literature."

By explaining the title, the author implies that all poems in the collection do not claim to be poetry of the same order. Readers of poetry do not need to be warned that even the 'bare' can be the subject of great poetry. The present collection, however, is valuable as much for its long preface as for the fifty-one poems in it. Together they constitute a much needed definition of the range of lyrical poetry at the end of the twentieth century. Tentatively worded as an *apologia pro vita sua*, the preface authoritatively discusses vital questions : Is there an objective standard of criticism? What is 'Indian' in our literature? Is change a must and always for the better? In what sense is a writer free? What are the limits of expression? And so on.

Possibly the most well-informed critic of our time, V. Sitaramiah shows, on his own record, that he has always had an open mind on experiment in literature. But he firmly insists that although limits of decency and good taste may change they can never be totally denied in any society. His definition, therefore, becomes wide enough to include everything that has been deeply felt and effectively expressed.

In themes the present collection covers the traditional range of love of nature, love of man and woman, nostalgia for the good old days, hopes for better times to come; it also contains occasional pieces written for broadcasting on special occasions; there are pieces of philosophical meditations on personal predicaments, emotional impacts of social injustices, mockery and satire of vehemence and bigotry; the range is wide enough to illustrate the larger definition of poetry propounded in the preface.

In form, the poems here represent mostly his later work where a prosodic foundation is overlaid with the wide swings of free verse, the strength of which can be brought out only through the living voice. The collection cannot claim to be representative in so far as it does not include specimens of his very notable contributions to the lyrical genre in Kannada in the traditional verse forms and songs set to music. But his abiding and deep interest in the arts, his studies in philosophy and economics, his wide ranging ruminations all find their reflection here.

V.M. Inamdar

1974 Award

Gopalakrishna Adiga

Vardhamana

Akshara Prakashana, Sagar; 1975 (Second Edition); 40 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Sri M. Gopalakrishna Adiga, distinguished Kannada poet, was born in 1918 and received his M.A. in English from Mysore University. At present, he is a visiting Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla. He started writing poetry from his boyhood days. He has published six volumes of poetry, two novels and a number of prose works. He is one of the eight distinguished men of letters on the General Council of the Sahitya Akademi and has translated Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* for the Akademi. He started the modernist movement in Kannada in 1954. A selection of his poems is translated in English.

Vardhamana is considered an outstanding contribution to modern Kannada poetry for its reflective quality and new form."

Gopalakrishna Adiga's *Vardhamana* along with his previous collection of poems, *Bhumigita*, represents the high watermark of the modernist movement in Kannada poetry. It marks too, a further

stage in his poetic development since *Bhumigita*. The title poem "Vardhamana" and two other major poems "Kupa Manjuka' and "Sri Rama Navamiya Divasa" strike a positive note as compared with *Bhumigita*, being in the direct line of development from such a poem in the *Bhumigita* collection as *Bhuta*. The minor and satirical pieces in *Vardhamana* however, reiterate the position adumbrated earlier in *Gondalapura*, his major work in that time. Along with the development of a more inducive and positive attitude, the *Vardhamana* volume shows a corresponding change in formal devices. In "Kupa Manduka" and "Sri Rama Navamiya Divasa", Adiga returns to the regular stanzaic pattern for the entire length of the poems. The quatrain with which he had started is deployed here as in sections in a few other modernist poems with greater sensitivity, flexibility and freedom.

"Vardhamana" and "Ajja Nettala" deal with tradition and innovation, the generation gap, the full realization of the potential of our youth and the process of individual evolution from animal ebullience of energy to spiritual enlightenment and maturity. "Sri Rama Navamiya Divasa" projects ideals of man and poet as well as ponders over the problem of evil. "Kupa Manduka" is an elegiac meditative poem which laments the rupture of a creative partnership but finally finds peace in a condition of self-discipline, self-knowledge and self-realisation. The satirical pieces caution the country against the hazards of leftism.

"Sri Rama Navamiya Divasa" is notable for its tragic realization on the one hand of the primal and ineradicable nature of evil with Ravana sprouting heads as fast as he is shorn of them and, on the other, of the concentration of the spiritual will as the moving force in the epic poet behind the presentation of such a heroic ideal as Rama.

"Ajja Nettala" begins with a marvellous evocation of the joy of childhood in a world which has not severed its links with tradition. It has two images, one superimposed on the other, the image of the banyan tree standing for tradition and that of a gambolling elephant, for the delightful period of childhood. A destructive sort of radicalism of youth cuts the world adrift from tradition, leaving it a wasteland. This later poem presents a negative and rather despairing picture of our predicament as compared with "Vardhamana". Another poem, "Nenapugale Hage" seems to stand in a similar relationship to the well known poem in the earlier collection, *Bhuta*.

Of the satirical poems, two are effective. The poet builds up an atmosphere of menace in "Baruththare" and in "Gajendra Moksha" written against the background of the Indo-China hostilities finds an apt image for credulity vulnerable to betrayal.

Vardhamana , undoubtedly, is an outstanding contribution to modern Kannada and modern Indian literature, with its poems like "Vardhamana" and "Kupa Manduka" already taking their place as contemporary classics.

K. Narasimha Murthy

1975 Award

S.L. Bhyrapna

Daatu

Sahitya Bhandara, Bangalore; 1973; 642 pp.; Rs. 25.00

"Sri S.L. Bhyrappa, distinguished Kannada novelist, was born in the village of Santesivara in Karnataka in 1934. He was orphaned at the age of eleven but he continued his studies doing odd jobs and passed both his B.A. and M.A. in Philosophy with first position in first class. He got his Ph. D. on "Truth and Beauty: A Study of Correlation" from the M.S. University of Baroda in 1962. He is at present a Reader in Philosophy at the Regional College of Education (NCERT) in Mysore. Sri Bhyrappa has published twelve novels so far. He has also written on philosophy, aesthetics and education. Besides *Daatu*, his novel *Vamśavriksha* has also won the Karanataka State Sahitya Akademi award.

Daatu is considered an outstanding contribution to Kannada literature for its dynamic characterisation, courage to hit at dogma, its progressive outlook and revolutionary bias."

Bhyrappa has chosen a very contemporary and controversial theme for his *Daatu*. The deftness in handling situations, the skill in

characterisation, the grip over the complicated pattern of the novel, the felicity with which the conversation is woven, the understanding of the subject in all its multiple manifestations in society, the competence in the comprehension of the gigantic proportions of the problem–all project Bhyrappa as an important Kannada novelist who is alive to contemporary issues.

Satyabhama, a brahmin girl, decides to marry Srinivasa, a *shudra*, from her awareness of the historical truths of evolution of the caste-based society. Srinivasa also defies tradition under the strong influence. But he succumbs to the dead-weight of tradition ultimately. Bettaiah, the Gandhian untouchable, meekly submits that the changeover should be smooth and non-violent, while his son Mohandas who hates his own name because it smacks of Gandhi's, strongly advocates the merciless revolutionary path to destroy the old system upon which a clean and equitable society could be built. Venkataramanaiah, an orthodox brahmin and the father of Satyabhama, while secretly enjoying the flesh of Matangi, an attractive untouchable woman, opposes the union of his daughter with a *shudra*. Melagiri, the father of Srinivasa, an active politician and a minister of State thwarts the attempts of his son to marry Satyabhama, the brahmin girl, fearing such an unconventional step may antagonise his kinsmen and cost his votes which could seal his political career. The elderly patriarch of his family, Tirumalagowda, grandfather of Srinivasa, claiming royal blood in his veins, declares that to bring a 'lowly' brahmin girl into the family, would pollute the purity of the breed. The unsophisticated mother of Srinivasa, however believes that to venture to accept Satyabhama as her daughter-in-law would be certainly sacrilegious and enrage the family deity, whose professional priest is none other than Venkataramanaiah. After a series of shocks and disillusionments the same Venkataramanaiah passes into an insane state and deserts the God he has worshipped all his life. He also passes into the fantasy world of mythology and identified himself with the mythical Vasistha and confers the status of Arundhati on Matangi, the untouchable who secretly quenched his lust and also bore him a boy, who later, under the revolutionary influence of Mohandas shapes into a power-keg. In the dizzy heights of his fantasy, Venkataramanaiah declares, every one has a right to the exalted

status of a brahmin, no matter what his caste is. Even women, who are traditionally *shudras* as far as Vedic rights are concerned, have a right to the Vedas, he declares, and proceeds to demonstrate this by conducting the *upanayana samskara* to his daughter Satyabhama, who as if under a spell, also passes into the world of the Vedas and finds a solution to the complex problem of the caste-system.

While all the efforts of Satyabhama, Srinivasa, Mohandas and others to cross the barriers of caste system, with all their earnestness, desire and zeal, prove to be too weak and inadequate compared with the monstrous dimensions of the system, the sublimated approach of Venkataramanaiah in his insane state of mind and later, the voluntary acceptance of *shudra*-hood by Satyabhama clearly stand out as an effort towards vertical integration of disparate sections of the society. The ideological concept of vertical integration, where there is no compromise, concession or adjustment which made the 'crossing' on the empirical level well-nigh impossible appears to advance a spiritual approach with its all-encompassing reach and inherent strength to provide a solid foundation for the new social order.

Daatu still continues to generate hot controversies in literary and semi-literary circles. But the novel has remained important and relevant, which speaks for its intellectual and creative qualities.

M.S.K. Prabhu

1976 Award

M. Sivaram

Manamanthana

Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Bangalore; 1974; xvi+412 pp.; Rs. 13.00

"Sri M. Sivaram, distinguished Kannada short story writer, novelist and humorist, was born in Bangalore in 1905. He

took his Bachelor's degree in Medicine and Surgery from the University Medical College of Mysore University. A practising doctor, he felt irresistibly drawn towards literature and began as a humorist, founding and editing *Koravanji* a magazine of humour, which ran for 25 years before closing down in 1967. He has written about 25 books in Kannada which include, besides novels, short stories, radio plays and skits, books on bio-medical and allied sciences cast in a literary mould.

Manamanthana is considered an outstanding contribution to Kannada literature for its mature literary style, capacity for turning the specialised into the aesthetic, and a narrative ability which transforms case-histories into fine short stories."

Manamanthana is a book of psychiatry in Kannada with illustrative case-records. It is undoubtedly the first of its kind in Kannada, coming as it does from the pen of Sivaram, who is not only an eminent and experienced doctor but also a well known humorist and writer in Kannada, endowed with a rare gift of presenting scientific themes in a literary garb and in a light hearted manner.

The book deals with certain mental disturbances or aberrations, which not only indicate loss of mental health but also show their profound effect on physical health, thus proving the intimate relationship between the mind and body. Unless the psychiatrist understands the root cause behind mental disorders, he cannot effect cure by merely treating the disorders in the body. The topics which are taken up for analysis are the anxiety syndrome, paraxoid syndrome, throat troubles, obsessional syndrome, manic depressive psychosis, schizophrenia, amnesia, and mental illnesses caused by physical ailments. These form the eight chapters of the first part of the book. In the ninth chapter, suggestions are made for the treatment of these disorders. The second part deals with the relationship between the mind and body very elaborately, ending with an exposition of the yoga-sutras of Patanjali.

This is not merely a book on psychiatry written in a scientific or academic manner. It is psychiatry, made interesting with lively narration of case-records in a generalised form, informed with a genuine sense of humour. It is a creative work in the sense that it combines a scientific temper with literary flair and narrative charm.

R.S. Mugali

1977 Award

K.S. Narasimhaswamy

Tereda Bagilu

K.S. Narasimhaswamy (the author), Bangalore; 1976; 60 pp.; Rs. 6.00

> "Sri K.S. Narasimhaswamy, distinguished Kannada poet was born in Kikkeri in Mandya District, Karnataka, in 1915. Abandoning his studies after changing over from Intermediate in Engineering to B.A. (1st Year), he worked in the Revenue and Local Self-Government Department of the Karnataka Government for over 33 years and retired as Superintendent in the Housing Board in 1970. He was also Literary Officer in the State Sahitya Academi and Editor, *Youth Journal*. The first collection of his poems *Mysore Mallige* was published in 1942. Since then he has published seven volumes of his poetry, a collection of essays and several translations from English into Kannada. He is a recipient of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat Golden Jubilee Honour for Poetry in 1970 and the Karnataka Sahitya Akademi Award in 1973.
>
> *Tereda Bagilu* is considered an outstanding contribution to Kannada Literature for its unobstrusive realism, incisive irony, maturity of craft and diction, and a deep involvement with the mystery of life and death."

This slim volume of poems published some fifteen years after Narasimhaswamy's previous collection is a *tour de force*. Having walked tall with both the Romantics and the Modernists over a period of fifty years and written some memorable poems, he has in this volume achieved a mastery all his own. Many of the poems here are like cantos forming inter-related parts of the poet's search for the meaning of life. He conducts the search from the edge of being and it is no wonder that quite a few of the poems deal with death in one form or other. The method Narasimhaswamy has adopted for his exploration is the anecdotal one. This gives him the opportunity to invest the central event with significant details which raise the whole poem to a level where new significances are continuously

hinted at. This method is very different from the symbolic approach of the other poets of the modern school in Kannada and so stands out as a unique exercise in communication.

The other equally remarkable thing about this collection is the diction the poet has chosen for expressing some complex experiences. Though perilously close to prose and the speech of the common man, the diction manages to harbour in it emotions which are the stuff of good poetry.

Poems like "Tereda Bagilu" (The Open Door), "Kumkuma Bhoomi" (The Vermilion Earth), "Bhootakannadi" (The Magnifying Glass) and "Railway Nildanalli" (At the Railway Station) are indeed among the very good poems written in Kannada. They have a quality of understatement which one does not usually see even in the most excellent poems of the language. This is one of the very best collections of poems that have appeared recently.

Ramchandra Sharma

1978 Award

B.G.L. Swamy

Hasuru Honnu

Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore; 1976; x+402 pp.; Rs. 36.00 (Paper back), 45.00 (Hard bound)

> "Sri B.G.L. Swamy, distinguished Kannada author, and the son of late Sri D.V. Gundappa, the doyen of Kannada literature, was born at Bangalore in 1918. He got his Doctorate in Science in Botany from the University of Mysore in 1944. Sri Swamy, who retired as Chief Professor of Botany at Presidency College, Madras in 1978 was sometime Research Fellow in Biology and Associate Professor of Botany at Harvard University. Besides over 300 research papers in Botany published in various Indian and foreign journals, he has published eight books in Kannada and one in Tamil. He transforms his academic knowledge into creative literature in his book. His

Americadalli Nanu received the Karnataka Sahitya Akademi Award in 1962.

Hasuru Honnu is considered an outstanding contribution to Kannada literature for its rare combination of science and poetry, lucidity and orginality of narrative and style, and endearing wit and humour."

Hasuru Honnu literally means 'Green Gold'. The title reflects the author's abiding love for the subject matter of the book: the world of plants. The book is avowedly "an attempt to acquaint the reader with some of the plants which have been our companions, in one way or the other, all through our lives." The method chosen for it, however, is unique.

What we have before us is apparently a report of scientific excursions. The author describes to us his visits to distant forests undertaken to enable the accompanying students to study plants in their natural habitat and to collect specimens of scientific interest. What results is a lively account of the elaborate preparations for the excursions, the pleasures and travails of the journeys, the pristine beauty of the forests, the idiosyncracies of the human actors involved and so on. The narration reveals the author's intimate knowledge of human nature and his sympathetic understanding of life. But, is not the object of the travels the study of plants *in situ*? True, and the occasion is made use of to introduce to us a rich variety of plants.

We get acquainted with hundreds of plant species as we browse through the pages of the books. We suddenly realise that the long 'familiar' peepul tree, the chilli plant and a host of others were not so familiar to us at all. The system of classifying plants, the place of the particular plant in it, the external characteristics which identify the plant, its life cycle, its economic importance and its role in our daily lives are all set forth in simple and clear language. The book is profusely illustrated with drawings prepared by the author himself.

What is distinctively Swamian about the discourses on plants is the insight it gives us into the lore of each plant species as revealed by the references to it in Indian mythology and classical literature–Sanskrit, Kannada and Tamil. Swamy deduces from these numerous references a wealth of information about the original

home of the plant, the probable date of its migration to our country and the places of its present sojourn.

The striking feature of Swamy's writing is its literary style which combines clarity with felicity, conciseness with vivid pictoriality and seriousness with subtle satire and boisterous humour. The book is not only a literary work of great merit but also an exquisite piece of popular science writing.

J.R. Lakshmana Rao

KASHMIRI

1956 Award

Zinda Kaul 'Masterji'

Sumran

Lala Rukh Publishers, Srinagar; 1955; 120 pp.

Sumran is a collection of poems which has brought many new words to Kashmiri language coined by the poet. With his poetical imagination, he has given a brief description of the four stages of life. The language is mixed with Kashmiri, Hindi and Sanskrit words having its roots in the Vedanta, a system of Hindu philosophy based on the Vedas which shows that his learning was extensive and exact.

He had dived deep into the *Gita*–its philosophy and practice. He was at a later stage influenced by Tagore's *Gitanjali*. The three aspects of the *Gita*, i.e. Karma (action), Upasana (practice), and Ginan (philosophy) were always lurking in his mind. Masterji acted in conformity with the dictum of Tagore and chanted the lore of beauty and nature.

Masterji was a teacher, a scholar and a saint. As a saint, he tried to enter the life divine. Deep study of Vedanta and old lores were always in his mind. He had also taken to the practice of Yoga.

S.N. Zadoo 'Suman'

1958 Award

Ghulam Mohiud-Din-Akhtar Wani

Sat Sangar

Mohiud-Din-Akhtar Wani (the author), Srinagar; 1955; 92 pp.

"Sri Ghulam Mohiud-Din-Akhtar Wani (b. 1928 in Srinagar) is a novelist and short story writer, who has the distinction

of being the author of the first published novel and the first collection of short storeis in Kashmiri."

Kashmiri short story writing started its journey with Dina Nath Nadim and S.N. Zutshi but *Sat Sangar* is prominent because it is the first collection. A number of short story writers were influenced by this book.

This collection include eight short stories, all written in 1955 except "Daryai Hund Yezar".

These stories have been written in the cultural and socio-economical background of Kashmir. In Kashmir, there is an age old tradition of Sufism in poetry and music but Akhtar talks of the contemporary period. His work portrays the social life of Kashmir during his time in its real perspective. He makes his characters true to life and not imaginary or unrealistic.

One would expect of the author to make use of beautiful landscapes and picturesque mountain peaks of Kashmir, but to everybody's surprise he has stressed upon the hard and real life of lower middle class Kashmiris. The purpose behind the stories seems to be the awakening of the masses.

During the past thirty years, the story in Kashmiri literature has developed tremendously but *Sat Sangar* still retains its importance.

Mohd. Zaman Azurdah

1961 Award

Rahman Rahi

Nouroz-i-Saba

Tajran-e-Kutaub, Srinagar, 1958; 144 pp.; Rs. 1.25

"Sri Rahman Rahi (b. 1925) is a leading poet of Kashmir. *Nouroz-i-Saba* is a collection of poems on various themes with a wide range of form and technique, and is remarkable for its bold experiments in poetic technique and freshness of imagery."

Nouroz-i-Saba is a Persian word used by the traditional musicians of Iran and Kashmir in the medieval times for a *Muqam* (mode) of the *Sufiana Mosiqi*. Rahman Rahi has chosen this term as the title for this volume.

Before publishing *Nouroz-i-Sabha*, Rahi along with other progressive Kashmiri poets had brought out a series of poems; none of the poems in these series could however catch the attention of the literary circles as did those of the *Nouroz-i-Saba*. *Nouroz-i-Saba* reveals Rahi's loyalty to the progressive movement of the time. At that time, the movement was being patronsied by some political leaders like G.M. Sadiq and D.P. Dhar at the local level, and in the field of literature by Dina Nath Nadim. Like some other followers of Nadim the spirit of that movement was propagated by Noor Mohammad Roshan and Rahman Rahi. With this background, some of the poems in *Nouroz-i-Saba* have represented beautifully the hardships suffered by the then labour class of Kashmir at the hands of exploiters. No doubt the volume is replete with flat slogans and versified statements on the said movement, even then the poet has succeeded in showing his skill in presenting his progressive outlook and in rendering two beautiful translations of Shaikh Sadi and Nazim Hikmat from Persian into Kashmiri. In this volume, Rahi has also introduced blank verse very beautifully for the first time in Kashmiri. With the above mentioned merits *Nourozi-i-Saba* was eventually considered to be the master piece of Rahi during the early sixties.

Marghoob Banihali

1967 Award

Amin Kamil

Laveh Te Praveh

Tajran-e-Kutaub, Srinagar; 1965; 176 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Sri Amin Kamil (Mohammed Amin Ningroo) (b. 1924), born in village Kapren, fifty miles south of Srinagar, had his higher education at the Muslim University, Aligarh, from where he obtained the degree of LL.B. in 1945. A prolific writer in prose as well as in verse, Sri Kamil already has a number of sig-

nificant works published to his credit. He has ventured on new paths in the realms of the short story and poetry and has tried to reflect the turmoil and the conflict of the present day in his writings. Besides, he has edited three volumes of Sufi poetry in Kashmiri with an exhaustive introduction which has been widely acclaimed. He has been in close touch with the literary activity in his state and is at present working as Editor in the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

The Award book, *Laveh Te Praveh*, is the latest collection of his poems including lyrics and ghazals. For freshness of sensibility, maturity of expression and striking technical innovation, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kashmiri literature."

'Waakh' and 'Watsun', the earliest genre of Kashmiri poetry practised by Lal Ded and Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (Nund Rishi) in the fourteenth century, underwent an evolutionary change lasting five centuries. The Sheikh renamed 'waakh' as 'shruk'. Habba Khatoon (sixteenth century) and Mahmood Gami (eighteenth century) evolved a 'ghazal' form of 'watsun'. It was Rasul Mir (nineteenth century) who succeeded in erasing the thin boundary line between the two and thus the first Kashmiri ghazal was born. Mahjoor, Azad and Nadim nourished it with utmost care.

The modern ghazal, however, owes its existence to Amin Kamil. This book *Laveh Te Praveh*, presents the flowering of the poet's genius. It took literary circles by surprise and stormed the traditional bastions of prosody. Though it contained more of *nazm* than ghazals, it opened a new path even for recognised ghazal writers of the day. Some of his seniors too could not escape the compelling influence of Kamil's individuality.

The diction used by the poet is non-traditional and closest to the language spoken by the common man. The metres are simple. Every word is chosen with meticulous care to suit the content. New words, phrases, metaphors and similes are coined to embellish the poems. The poet speaks to the reader in a colloquial tone, appealing to his innermost sentiments. He uses satire and sarcasm as a vehicle to mirror the reality of life and at the same time without hurting anyone's feelings in the process. His ghazals betray the passion of the moth and the intensity of the flame. Yet he does not feel bound

by any dogma or ideology. Good imagery and lofty imagination are his forte.

Besides forging innovations based on the old Kashmiri folk form, Kamil like a great artist has introduced all the characteristics of western poesy in his work. Some good examples of modern Kashmiri *nazm* are also found in the book. They are "Jungle", "Flame of the Lamp", "Miracle", "Apple Blossom" and "Where Will You Go Tomorrow?"

T.N. Kaul

1969 Award

Abdul Khaliq Tak Zainagiri

Kashri Zabon Y Hund Allaqavad Phera

Abdul Khaliq Tak Zainagiri (the author), Srinagar; 1967; 520 pp.; Rs. 25.00

"Sri Abdul Khaliq Tak Zainagiri (b. 1924) is a distinguished scholar,author and poet. Born in the village Hardushiva, Zaingir, in the Sopore district of Kashmir, Sri Zainagiri had his early education in Urdu. After completing the Honours course in Urdu and in Revenue, Civil and Criminal law, he joined the Revenue Department of the State where he is at present working as an Assistant Collector.

Sri Zainagiri's career as a civil servant has not come in the way of his abiding interest in literature and he has wielded his pen in various genres of literary writing. Besides the three volumes of his collection of poems entitled *Myon Aalav*, he has also published a play in blank verse named *Azich Kasheer*. In addition, he has employed his limited leisure to a study of the Kashmiri language in depth and has worked very hard over a long period in collecting a vast and rich material for his survey.

The Award book, *Kashri Zabon Y Hund Allaqavad Phera*, contains a systematic study of the Kashmiri language as spoken

in and around the velley. Being a pioneering effort of its kind it has already received the First Award of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Language in 1968. For its profound scholarship and analytical insight in a field hitherto unexplored, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kashmiri literature."

Kashri Zabon Y Hund Allaqavad Phera deals with the phonetical, dialectical and lexical variations of the Kashmiri language found in various parts, regions and areas of Kashmir. The author has taken great pains to collect the varied and scattered material to pinpoint these variations which are intangible.

The author has illustrated his contentions with a considerable number of examples which sufficiently show that he has travelled vastly in almost all the regions of Kashmiri speaking areas and has established direct contacts in its various parts with the people belonging to different vocations and professions.

The author has collected a good number of technical words particularly in use amongst the various professions of Kashmir. The illustrative charts contained in the book are also of considerable benefit to students of linguistics.

G.N. Gauhar

1970 Award

Mohyid-din Hajini

Maqualaat

Mohiyid-din Hajini (the author), Srinagar; 1967; 199 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"Sri Mohyid-din Hajini (b. 1917) is a distinguished author, playwright and scholar in Kashmiri. Born at Hajin Sonawari in Kashmir Sri Mohyid-din had his early education there and then joined the Aligarh Muslim University for his post-graduate studies where he received the degree of M.A. with LL.B. and Diploma in Journalism. In 1942 he was appointed Lecturer

in Arabic at P.W. College, Jammu. He is working as a Professor of Arabic at S.P. College, Srinagar, since 1958.

A born rebel, Sri Hajini has taken active part in the political awakening of his people and has undergone flogging, incarceration and detention at various times. He has also participated in the literary renaissance of his region and has associated with a number of literary and scholarly associations. He has broken new ground in Kashmiri writing by his full-length play *Grees Sund Ghara* and his book of prose *Kashere Naasrech Kitab* which has received an award of the State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. He has also compiled the first anthology of Kashmiri Poetry published by the Sahitya Akademi.

The Award book, *Maqualaat*, is the latest collection of his essays first published in 1967. Written on a variety of subjects these essays are an eloquent testimony to the maturity of prose writing in Kashmiri. For its deft use of everyday speech, serenity of outlook and lucidity of style the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kashmiri literature."

This book consists of seven essays on various subjects. In the first essay on the controversial topic on the origin and development of Kashmiri language, the author has dwelt upon the historical background of ancient Kashmir, the influences it has received from various cultures and languages and finally the various viewpoints about the origin and development of Kashmiri language.

In the essay "Sketches of Folk Lore", the author has pinpointed the influences of Saivism, Buddhist philosophy and Muslim mysticism upon Kashmiri folk literature, substantiating his viewpoint with accurate references. This discussion, for the first time makes a scholarly assessment of Kashmir's rich folk heritage.

In another essay the author has cited all such anecdotes which are the sources of Kashmiri proverbs and which have become part of legend. The other essays deal with the various influences upon Kashmiri culture.

The author also deals with the exposure of the imperialistic designs of the Moghuls on Kashmir and the distortion caused to Kashmir's identity by the Moghuls. The critical essay about the literary intricacies of mystic poet Assad Parray is the first serious attempt to assess and evaluate the inherent richness of Kashmiri Sufi poetry. In the

dearth of literary criticism in Kashmiri, this essay also provides an attraction to a generation of critics to study and assess the poetic art of Kashmir.

Tagore is one of the few Indian literary giants who has been widely read and assessed in this country. Hajini has, in the last essay of this book, introduced Tagore's genius to Kashmiri intelligentsia with deep understanding of his thought and art.

G.N. Gauhar

1972 Award

Ali Mohammad Lone

Suyya

Baz Talash Vihar, Srinagar; 1971; 159 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"Sri Ali Mohammad Lone (b. 1926) born at Srinagar, received his higher education at the Punjab University, Lahore. After the partition of the country, he joined the Kashmir Militia as a political commander and later worked in All India Radio as a writer and producer. He is now working as Deputy Secretary of the J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

Publishing his first play in 1956, Sri Lone has by now produced a number of books in Kashmiri which include a novel and a travelogue besides plays and translations. He has been awarded twice by the State Academy for his works. He has also received the Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1972 for his translation of Maxim Gorky's *Mother* into Kashmiri.

The Award book, *Suyya*, is his latest play which is woven round the historical character of Suyya, an engineer in the ancient Kingdom of Avantivarman. For its lofty idealism and successful craftsmanship, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Kashmiri literature."

Ali Mohammad Lone is a prominent playwright and his work *Suyya* has enriched the Kashmiri language and provides glimpses into the past. The legend that forms the basis of *Suyya* has been taken from the *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, the oldest chronicle in Kashmiri. The event dramatised in this play, occurred some time during the reign of Avantivarman.

The author himself says that he has written this play in such a way that the reader would regard the events as having occurred in real life. However, on deep study, it is felt that he has failed in this attempt.

The author has succeeded in keeping the suspense alive by presenting a comparison between love and duty, rest and labour, peaceful family life and the tough life outside, emotion and rational feelings.

Suyya, the hero, is caught amidst a hysterical struggle of indecision within himself till the play reaches the climax. The same is the case with the strong character of Chandali, his mother. The strength of Chandali's character is revealed by the dramatic presentation of how she tells Suyya that he is not her real son but has been sent to this world to "eradicate famine and flood."

Mohd. Zaman Azurdah

1975 Award

Ghulam Nabi Khayal

Gashir Munaar

Iqbal Publications, Srinagar; 1972; 512 pp.; Rs. 25.00

"Sri Ghulam Nabi Khayal, distinguished Kashmiri poet, critic and translator, was born in 1936 in Srinagar. He is a graduate from Jammu and Kashmir University and has been associated with Radio Kashmir and the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. He has made significant contribution to the development of Kashmiri journalism and

is the chief editor of the bi-weekly *Iqbal* published from Srinagar. He has published eleven books so far which include translations and anthologies.

Gashir Munaar is considered an outstanding contribution to Kashmiri literature for its scholarly appraisal of a few of the most outstanding figures in world literature and its mature and artistic style."

Gashīr Munaar is a compilation of eleven articles written for the first time in the Kashmiri language on the lives and works of eleven luminaries of world literature including Homer, Virgil, Kalidasa, Imraul-Qais, Dante, Hafiz, Shakespeare, Goethe, Pushkin, Iqbal and Tagore.

Though these articles are neither the result of research work nor an original work in the literal sense of the word, to a Kashmiri reader, it has both the values. At the same time, none of the articles can be considered a piece of translation. The author has taken pains to study a great deal of written material in English and Urdu on all these writers and has collected, collated, sifted and arranged the material about their literary contribution. In this capacity, the book was adjudged as an outstanding contribution to Kashmiri literature.

The author has given a scholarly treatment to his subject, while discussing their literary contribution. Though the author must have read the original works of Shakespeare and Iqbal, his personal assessment about these two is not found in the two articles written on them. He has confined himself to the factual aspects of their contribution and the critical assessment made about their work by other critics. *Gashir Munaar* is of immense value to Kashmiri readers.

G.N. Gauhar

1976 Award

Pushkar Bhan

Machama

Pushkar Bhan (the author), Srinagar; 1975; 227 pp.; Rs. 13.00

"Sri Pushkar Bhan, distinguished Kashmiri playwright, was born in 1925 at Srinagar. Graduating from the East Punjab

University in 1947, he was for sometime stage artist and playwright in the National Cultural Front, Kashmir, before joining the Indian People's Theatre Association in 1950 at Bombay. He joined Radio Kashmir, Srinagar, in 1952 where he continues to work as Producer. A playwright with nearly 150 radio-plays and features to his credit, he has been thrice honoured by the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages for his plays for the theatre. He has also made a mark as an actor in two Kashmiri films–*Manzirat* and *Mahjoor*.

Machama is considered an outstanding contribution to Kashmiri literature for its good-humored depiction of the absurdities and incongruities of life and its witty and sympathetic insight into human nature."

Pushkar Bhan is a reputed playwright in Kashmiri known for his humour and satire. The plays included in the present volume have direct relevance to the social and economic life of the lower middle class people.

Machama presents an imaginary world in all its eight plays, while the main characters Machama, Rahman Dada, Sula Gota, Khitji (hero's wife) and Kak (hero's father) remain the same with almost no change in character or behaviour.

The main character, Machama is always dreaming. This day-dreaming makes him think aloud and by dramatising this loud thinking the author moves with a mirror in his hand from one quarter to another to make his readers realise their unrealistic approach to life. The day-dreaming of the hero is pivoting humour.

Machama has become popular with the masses, the plays having been staged and broadcast, making its creator a legend in his life time.

The language employed in *Machama* is very simple and the approach to problems direct. This has really enriched the stock of humour and satire in Kashmiri literature.

Mohd. Zaman Azurdah

1978 Award

G.R. Santosh

Be-Soakh Ruh

Idara Koeshur Adab, Srinagar; 1977; 392 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Ghulam Rasool Santosh, distinguished Kashmiri poet, was born in Srinagar, Kashmir in 1929. It was during 1947-53 that he grew into a poet and a painter. He studied art under Prof. N.S. Bendre at Baroda. His first Urdu novel *Samandar Pyasa Hai* was published in 1963 and won him an Award from the Jammu & Kashmir Academy. His opera *Gulrez* and play *Tcheth* have also won Jammu & Kashmir Academy Awards. Besides being a significant poet in Kashmiri, Sri Santosh is one of the foremost painters in India, having held several exhibitions in the country and abroad and his works are scattered all over the world in art galleries, museums and private collections.

Be-Soakh Ruh is considered an outstanding contribution to Kashmiri literature for its deep humanism, profound spiritual insights, freshness of language and imagery, and rich, poetic content."

Ghulam Rasool Santosh, eminent Kashmiri poet, is also an artist of international repute. This additional characteristic, together with his leaning towards Tantric philosophy, has helped him to acquire the capacity for mature appreciation of human life and values. This becomes abundantly clear when one goes through his collection *Be-Soakh Ruh*. Even while tackling mundane themes he attains sublimity and also wafts the reader into celestial realms.

While some of his earlier poems betray a superficial sensibility, the serious tone of the ghazals, *nazm* and sonnets written during the sixties and early seventies highlight the amazing growth of his thought-process and his contribution to the later-day transformation in the style and content of Kashmiri poetry. He makes full use of free verse to describe his experiences, especially those of a spiritual nature. Universal love and tolerance are his special attributes.

The influence of Santosh's multi-dimensional personality on his poetry is as transparent in this collection as in the colours on his

canvasses. He uses his pen with the same ease, fluency and confidence with which he wields his brush. He has, through innovations pioneered many new trends in poetry and acquired a distinctive identity. As he says in the foreword, the delectable poems contained in the book are the result of his experiences and the vicissitudes faced by him. They impart that *ananda* to the reader which is not momentary but overwhelming and everlasting. He feels a natural urge to share his experiences with others.

In this book, he presents himself not only as an ordinary man, a lover of nature and a friend of the deprived but also as an artist creating images from words, a seeker after truth and one who sees the *Nirankaar* in his own *Akaar*.

T.N. Kaul

KONKANI

1977 Award

Ravindra Kelekar

Himalayant

Zaag Prakashan, Pune; 1976; 116 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Sri Ravindra Kelekar, distinguished Konkani essayist and prose-writer, was born at Kunkalali village in Goa in 1925. Inspired by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, he was drawn into the Goan Liberation Movement in 1946 before he could finish his Secondary School education at the Liceum. He took part in the Movement for three years, at times also as an armed revolutionary. He stayed in Wardha for five years to study Gandhian Satyagraha. He published a Konkani fortnightly *Mirg* from Wardha for three years and a weekly *Gomanta Bharati* from Bombay to propagate the Gandhian philosophy of agitation. He returned to Goa in 1959 to plunge into direct action and has been in the vanguard of all important political, social and cultural movements in the region. Sri Kelekar has fifteen volumes in Konkani and three in Marathi to his credit. Two of his books have received the Konkani Bhasha Mandal Prize and the Goa Kala Akademi has also awarded him twice.

Himalayant is considered an outstanding contribution to Konkani literature for its simple yet highly evocative prose, its aesthetic and deeply spiritual quality coupled with occasional humour, and its rich cultural content."

Himalayant by Ravindra Kelekar is a pioneering effort in the language in many respects. This is a travelogue of a journey by foot in the Himalayas (Uttarakhand) undertaken in 1956 covering Jamnotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath, about six hundred miles, spanning about two months.

The author, aspiring to catch the thrill of seeing the Himalayas ever since his boyhood days, sets out with the urge to explore the

unfrequented land and reaches the sources of the Yamuna, Ganga, Mandakini and Alakananda. This is an arduous 'aesthetic journey' attempted by a lover of nature in quest of beauty and grandeur, described in poetic prose.

The travelogue reflects the author's personality. Kelekar, a widely travelled and well-read Gandhian, is also well known as a thinker. When he travels, he pauses not only to describe but also to introspect, to reflect on, to theorize and to think. He does possess a poetic sensibility as well, which this book amply illustrates.

The author, while seeking to explore the unfrequented, seems also to be seeking himself. In the process, he displays a wide ranging knowledge of Indian history and geography, sociology and religion, tradition and culture. Though well established as a prose writer, he is gifted with a poetic diction as well. A straightforward, lucid, simple, graceful and cultured style, an eye on precision and concision, apt imagery and relevant allusions are some of the salient features embellishing the contents of the book.

Prakash Thali

1978 Award

D.K. Sukhthankar

Manni Punav

Vivek Prakashan, Bombay; 1977; 96 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri D.K. Sukhthankar, distinguished Konkani essayist and prose-writer, was born at Marcela, Goa in 1924. Sri Sukhthankar, who is a doctor by profession and has spent a decade in the service of lepers, was educated at Panjim, Goa and obtained the degree of 'Medico-Cirurgiao' in 1952. He joined Goa's struggle for freedom in 1946 and was involved in revolutionary activities of a violent nature for some time and was arrested and detained for a month in Goa. Sri Sukhthankar has been writing since 1953. His Sahitya Akademi Award winning book has also received the Konkani Bhasha Mandal Award and the Goa Kala Akademi Award.

> *Manni Punav* is considered an outstanding contribution to Konkani literature for its irony and humour, sympathetic insight into human nature, personal, intimate style and lively language."

Manni Punav by D.K. Sukhthankar is a collection of 17 essays, mostly humourous. Sukhthankar is a leading humorist in the language. He is an essayist who has been consistently contributing to this genre for over the last twenty-five years. Born and brought up in Goa during the Portuguese regime, Goa and Goans are the author's obsession. *Manni Punav* is the name of a famous *zatra* in a Goan village called Mashel, the birthplace of the author.

The publishers have rightly called these esays "writings on the single theme of Goa and Goans, the author's first love." The author shows a keenness of observation and a cartoonist's pen in delineating the unusual typical characters and situations which he excellently caricatures. Essays like "Mashel", "Aalamped-dyar ani Honvllo", "Mhalo" and "Moddvoll" are good illustrations.

Some of these essays, while being humorous are also tinged with serious introspection and musings on the urbanisation of Goan villages, a continual drift towards cities and a lament at this change-over. The very first essay "Mashel" is an instance in point. The author usually weaves his essays around situations and persons, and when they come vividly alive, one almost sees one's own reflections in these portrayals.

Sukhthankar's is a simple and conversational style, interspersed with local idioms, wordplay, childhood reminiscences, dialogues, etc. Most of his humour is regional. Structurally the author's approach is traditional with a beginning, exposition, development of the theme, a little digression and the planned ending.

Prakash Thali

MAITHILI

1966 Award

Yashodhar Jha

Mithila-Baibhav

Yashodhar Jha (the author), Patna; 1963; xxxviii+131 pp.; Rs. 7.00

"Sri Yashodhar Jha (b. 1901) is a distinguished scholar and author in Maithili. Born in the village Satlakha in Darbhanga, Bihar, in a family of learned scholars, Sri Yashodhar Jha had his early education in several institutions in the area and later received his degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy from the Punjab University where he topped the list of successful candidates. After receiving a further degree in Education from the Banaras Hindu University, he was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the Maharaja's College, Jaipur, in which capacity he served for twenty-three years. In 1949 he retired to his village and has since devoted his time to scholarly pursuits. Having worked in his early career in close association with the eminent scholar of Vedic studies, Pandit Madhusudan Jha of Jaipur, Sri Yashodhar Jha has drunk deep at the fountain of Indian philosophy and learning and has a number of scholarly treatises to his credit.

The Award book, *Mithila-Baibhav*, is his latest study in the field of philosophy and presents a synthesis of the various systems of Indian philosophy. For its lucid prose style and originality of treatment, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Maithili literature."

The present book *Mithila-Baibhav* highlights the synthesis of Indian philosophy. For a long period, Mithila has been the home of philosophers, and is renowned for, therefore, philosophical thought, and depth of erudition.

The author of the book is the student of Pandit Madhusudana Vidyavacaśpati. So the subject is well presented on the lines of his teacher. The language is lucid and polished, and the method of approach is simple which has rendered the subject easily understandable.

The style of the introduction of *Triparva Atma* or *Trik Vidya* and *panch parva visva* or *pancha pundarika vidya* presented here indicates that the author is thoroughly conversant with the subject.

The perception of non-difference in difference, unity in diversity and an attempt to make it understandable to others is possible only by an authoritative scholar like him.

The book deals with the synthesis of different philosophical aspects, summary of different philosophers, the nature of Vaisesika, Sankhya and Vedanta, examination of Atman in the light of Vaisesika, Sankhya and Vedanta, Nirguna Atman, Devatavada and the glory of Mithila.

The object of the author is to bring to light the characteristics of the learned scholars of Mithila and he has been successful in his attempt.

Kishorenath Jha

1968 Award

Yatri (Sri Vaidyanath Mishra)

Patrahin Nagna Gachh

Maithili Akademi, Allahabad; 1967; 96 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Yatri Sri Vaidyanath Mishra (b. 1911) born in the village of Tarauni in Darbhanga district (Bihar), Sri Mishra received his early education in Sanskrit from his father and in several *pathashalas* of the district. He pursued his Sanskrit studies at Varanasi and Calcutta and also studied Pali at Kalania, Colombo (Ceylon).

After his marriage in 1931, Sri Mishra took up a teaching job at Saharanpur (U.P.) in 1932. But his restless spirit soon made him a wanderer. He toured round the country during 1934-36, visited Ceylon at the end of his tour and joined the Buddhist Order in 1937 when he received his name Nagarjun

by which he is known in the Hindi literary world. His wanderings also took him to Burma and Tibet and brought him in close association with Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan. His participation in a peasant struggle landed him in jail in 1939. Since then he has devoted himself entirely to writing in Maithili and Hindi. His several novels and poems present a vivid picture of the life of the people, particularly of the rural folk, and are imbued with a keen sense of satire and caricature.

The Award book, *Patrahin Nagna Gachh*, is the latest collection of his poems in Maithili and marks a new phase in the development of the poet's sensibility. For its picturesque quality and keenness of observation it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Maithili literature."

Patrahin Nagna Gachh is a collection of fifty lyrics by Yarti, an outstanding modern Maithili poet. Primarily a 'new poet' and an experimentalist, he has led the experiment to the stage from where the younger generation has set out for further experimentations. He is a modern poet but not a modernist. His diction, images and style are mature and original and bear the stamp of great literature.

The poems which are remarkably profound, impressive and new are also characteristically realistic as well as revolutionary in approach towards the various facets of life and society. In this collection of his recent poems, Yatri excels in free-verse, although he has also variously experimented in the field of traditional metres and rhymes. These poems are thoroughly progressive and communistic in outlook and yet deeply rooted in the culture of Mithila.

His greatest lyric "Anhara Zinagi" (Blind Life) is included in this collection. It contains a scintillating portrait of an old blind man climbing up a hill with difficulty, and meeting at the top the lady of hope, peace and success. The poem symbolises the struggle and the frustration of an old culture and civilization at the cross-roads, full of hope and peace despite desperate conditions.

Some of the other leading poems are "Padala Chichi Chchaguntame" (Am I in a Non-plussed State) and "Anasohata-i-Kadamaka Phoola" (This Misfit Kadamba Flower). The themes

of the poems include nature, Lord Siva, family ties, bureaucracy, dry and anticultural modernity, alienation and exploitation, etc.

K.K. Mishra

1969 Award

Upendranath Jha

Du Patra

Dwijendra Kumar Jha, Patna; 1968; 88 pp.; Rs. 1.50

> "Sri Upendranath Jha (b. 1917) born at village Haripur Baxitola in the Darbhanga district of Bihar, received his primary education at the local school, and later matriculated from the High School at Rajnagar. After graduating from the Bihar College of Engineering, he joined the Public Health Engineering Department of the State where he is at present Additional Chief Engineer. He is a member of the Institute of Engineers India and the American Water Works Association.
>
> Though an engineer by training and profession, Sri Jha is a person of deep literary sensibility and is proficient in several languages of Northern India. He started writing poems while still at school and has continued his literary pursuits despite his professional pre-occupation. He has already published nine works which incude poems, short stories and novels besides translations from Sanskrit, English and Bengali.
>
> The Award book, *Du Patra*, is a short novel first published in 1968. It narrates the emotional crisis in the lives of two women, one Indian and another American. For its sensitive portrayal of human emotions and for its boldness in execution the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Maithili literature."

Du Patra (Two Letters) is a novelette complete in only two letters depicting the emotional crises of two young women, one Indian and the other American. The first letter is written by Indu Devi to her husband Surendra who had gone to the USA for higher studies and is staying there for the last ten years. Ramesh, Indu's cousin who also had gone to the States later, had seen how Surendra

enamoured of western ways of living, was entangled in a love affair with a good girl, Jessica. Ramesh sends the English translation of Indu's letter (to her husband) to Jessica with whom he had developed friendship during his stay in the States. The reply Ramesh gets from Jessica is the second letter.

The first letter depicts the feelings and sentiment of an educated lady born and brought up in Indian-Maithili tradition, and is written at a time when her husband asks from the far-off land that she too should agree to the proposed divorce. In the second letter we find the thoughts and anguish of an American girl who is really in love with the Americanised Surendra, but is now seized with the problems arising out of the peculiar situation. Jessica is deeply impressed by the innate sincerity and unsophisticated behaviour of Ramesh and through his association, comes to know something about Hindu religion, culture and ways of life.

In this novelette are presented two social pictures–one Indian–Maithili and another American. The author's analysis has been objective and both patterns of life have been judged in the light of ultimate human values. Lives of male characters particularly that of Surendra, the hero, are unfolded most realistically and the depiction of female characters is emotionally touching and pathetic, morally convincing and ennobling. The language is simple but chaste and charged with emotional fervour. The story woven around the four characters Indu, Surendra, Ramesh and Jessica is presented in a straight forward and convincing manner with utmost economy of words making it an artistic creation of perfect design.

Upendra Nath Jha 'Vyas'

1970 Award

Kashikanta Mishra 'Madhup'

Radha Viraha

Hainandan Singh Samarak Nidhi, Dharbanga; 1969; xx+238 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri Kashikanta Mishra 'Madhup' (b. 1906) was born in a family known for its tradition of scholarship in a remote village of Darbhanga district. Sri Mishra received his education in

Sanskrit and Indian philosophy under distinguished pandits of Bihar and Varanasi. After obtaining the degree of Acharya in grammar and literature and of Vedanata Shastri in philosophy, Sri Mishra became head pandit of Jayanand High School at Bahera where he has been working ever since.

Deeply rooted in the life and culture of his people, Sri Mishra began writing poetry in Maithili at an early age and published his first collection of poems *Apurba Rasagulla* in 1942. These poems written in the manner of folk songs received wide popularity among the Maithili people. Other collections of poems followed in quick succession bringing him wider acclaim and a number of prizes. Sri Mishra then took to composing long narrative poems in which his consciousness of social problems is marked. For a collection of three such narrative poems, entitled *Triveni*, Mithil Mahasabha bestowed on him the title of Kavi-Chooramani.

The Award book, *Radha Viraha*, is a narrative poem of epic dimensions treating of the well known episode in Krishna legend. For its creative use of an ancient poetic tradition and richness of expression the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to the contemporary Maithili literature."

Radha Viraha, the epic poems of seventeen cantos, is an important and popular book in Maithili. The poet is famous for his tragic descriptions through ornamental language. He as one of the early modern poets of Maithili, has always been with the masses and shared their economic hardships. His ability to convey serious thoughts has always been praised.

The book is based mainly on the *Raspanchadhyayee*, *Venugeeta*, *Gopiguta*, the *Harivansha Purana* and also on the Radha elements of the *Vrahma Vaivarta Purana*. Apart from these the poet has also shown his originality in depicting newness in the theme. In many places the poet's devotional feelings have also been expressed in a simple and lucid manner. In the sayings of Radha to Uddhava, his feelings about women characters have also been expressed. Krishna and Radha, the symbol of Shringar Kavya in Indian literature, are the hero and heroine of the present Mahakavya. In accordance with the traditions of Mithila the poet has begun the book with a prayer of Shakti. Shringar Rasa is the mainstream in the Mahakavya and eight other Rasas have also been dealt with.

The book presents a vivid picture of the Vipralambha Shringar. The poet, renowned for his descriptions of Karuna Rasa, has tried his best to commensurate the feeling with descriptions. The language of the book is ornamental, full of Madhur Bhava, Anupras Zamaka, Vyangya, etc.

Shiva Shankar Jha 'Kant'

1971 Award

Surendra Jha 'Suman'

Payasvini

Maithili Mandir, Dharbhanga; 1969; viii+83 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Sri Surendra Jha 'Suman' (b. 1913) is a distinguished poet and author in Maithili. Born at Darbhanga, Sri Jha received the degree of Shiksha-Sahityacharya from Bihar and of Kavya-Tirtha from Bengal. He edited various journals including *Mithila-Mihir* during 1935-52 and *Vaidehi*, a monthly in Maithili, during 1949-64. He has been closely associated with various literary associations in Maithili. At present he is working as Head of the Maithili Department, Bihar University. He has recently been elected to the Bihar Legislative Assembly.

An erudite scholar and a sensitive poet, Sri Jha has a number of publications to his credit in Maithili as well as in Sanskrit and Hindi.

The Award book, *Payasvini*, is a collection of his poems in Maithili first published in 1969. It contains 25 lyrics about the beauty of nature and simplicity of rural life. For its colourful imagery and metrical experimentation, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to the contemporary Maithili literature."

In *Payasvini*, the poet has taken to fresh woods and pastures new. The first poem, giving the title to this volume, is a comparison of the rainy season to a milch cow. Rains really feed all the living beings. Without rains there would be no water, no milk, no food

and living beings will die. The metaphor is sustained throughout the poem but the lines are not as bright as they were in *Archana*. We do not find the chiselled expression of *Archana* anywhere in *Payasvini*.

The conception of "Pawasa Payasvini" is attractive but the expression is not so happy. "Pawasi Tamasi", the next poem is a poor repetition of "Saona-Bhadava". Mention of *Rasa* by name is a demerit and that we find in many stanzas here. The third poem, "Pawasa Mrtyunjaya" is better. The three poems on the *Sarita* (river) have the same pattern as the poems on rains. They are also not bright examples of Suman's poetry. It is difficult to appreciate the second stanza of "Sarita Rasawanti" where contradictory ideas are expressed.

Though some lines of "Sarita Vanita" are good, yet on the whole the poem is not attractive. In "Sarita Kavita" the poet is not able to convince the readers of his conclusion that the river alone is poetry and poetry alone is the river. "Dipaka Ekaki" is a successful poem. It is an appreciation of the life of sacrifice like the one depicted in 'Tani" in *Pratipada*. "Vana Parva" is Wordsworthian praise for living with nature and appreciation of unity in multiplicity. Some of the lines remind us of Amien's songs in *As you Like It*. It is a praise of natural living.

In "Pujana Upadana", Suman has suggested a new form of worshipping God. The hint perhaps has been taken from a Sanskrit verse but Suman creates his own materials for worship. He wants his life to be dedicated to the welfare of all living beings.

He prays for getting a heart that sympathizes with the downtrodden. He wants to live in tune with nature. He wants to give hopes to the forsaken and wishes to worship his God with a heart purified by these offerings. The spirit of these lines is that 'work is worship'. This poem shows the poet's all round interest in the betterment of humanity and his devotion to God.

The three poems describe the mountain as an old man, a young man, and a child. "Pratima Bhavara" shows that both the idea and the idol are equally important. In "Bhiksha-patra", the poet depicts the character of Vinoba. "Satya Surya : Vayasa Purya" recollects the past reminiscences in the tranquility of old age. "Nati Vadhuti" shows the contract between an actress and a housewife. "Sama Vishama" is a new experiment of an old song pattern. The poet changes the amorous theme and sings of the hard facts of the life of a labourer and his achievement. Similarly, "Khanda: Akhanda"

shows the contrast between analytical science and synthetical poetry and argues for the superiority of the latter. "Vidambana" shows the futility of pleasing great men with presents or praises. It is a successful poem and the poet has succeeded in giving a charming poetic expression to his ideas.

In "Dvaita Gita", the poet humbly says to his goddess that he is only an instrument and everything is done by the goddess herself. *Payasvini* is a volume of good poems, which one would like to read again and again.

Shrikrishna Mishra

1973 Award

Braj Kishore Verma 'Manipadma'

Naika Banijara

Mithila Sankritik Parishad, Calcutta; 1972; viii+167; Rs. 2.50

"Braj Kishore Verma 'Manipadma' (b. 1918) was born in a peasant family in the district of Darbhanga. Sri Verma knows a number of languages and is a man of varied tastes. Besides being an experienced hunter and a collector of folklore and folk songs, he has actively participated in archaeological excavations and has made a deep study of the Tantric cult. Besides eight novels and a drama, he has published many books and research papers on the subjects of his interest.

The Award book, *Naika Banijara*, is his latest novel which is based on a historical ballad of the Mithila region. For its rich local colour and rythmic prose style, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Maithili literature."

Naika Banijara is a novel based on the story of a popular folk-epic of Mithila. In it, Verma has depicted the social, cultural as well as economic life of Mithila with special reference to the business community that was ruling and dominating this land in the age of the Buddha. In his distinguished poetic style the novelist has narrated

very artistically the business activities of its hero Naika in the wider perspective of ancient Mithila society. But the main human interest lies in the lively characterisation of its heroine Phuleshwari, who in the absence of her husband Naika, is sold to Kumbha Doma as a cruel victim of a family conspiracy. But she comes out untouched by all the evils which she has faced bravely with unparalleled courage and tolerance in keeping with the high moral values of Indian womanhood. Finally she meets her dear husband very dramatically and the story ends on a pleasent note.

Braj Kishore Verma 'Manipadma' is an eminent scholar of Maithili folk literature as well as a popular master-craftsman of this form who successfully portrays the Maithili way of life in a historical background of the ancient society by lucid description, distinct and impressive characterisation, healthy, constructive, and an idealistic approach to life and also by creating a natural poetic effect. As a matter of fact *Naika Banijara* is an epic written in prose in which the art of novel writing has touched a new horizon. The novel is full of imagination denoting the novelist's keen observation of man and nature. Realistic portrayals of ancient Mithila society, distinguished handling of the theme, and mastery over language and style as well as form and technique are some of the many specialities of *Naika Banijara*.

Durganatha Jha 'Shreesh'

1975 Award

Girindra Mohan Mishra

Kichhu Dekhal Kichhu Sunal

Sri Madan Mohan Mishra, Dharbhanga; 1973; x+360 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Girindra Mohan Mishra, distinguished Maithili author, received his higher education in Sanskrit and Law. He got his M.A. degree in Sanskrit in 1913 and started practising Law in 1919. He was elected to the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council on a Congress ticket during 1926-29. Subsequently he

acted as adviser to the then Maharaja of Darbhanga till 1962. He took active part in the movement for getting recognition to Maithili as an independent language after 1914 and was thrice elected President to the Maithili Bhasha Sahitya Parishad. He has written a number of articles in Maithili and Hindi. He has written only one book–the one which gets the Akademi award.

Kichhu Dekhal Kichhu Sunal is considered an outstanding contribution to contemporary Maithili literature as an invaluable record of the socio-cultural activities of the Mithila region and for its refined language and noble style."

As the title 'Something Seen and Something Heard' suggests, this is a type of memoir of an illustrious son of Mithila. It an account of socio-political events right from the late nineties down to the present decade witnessed and confronted by the octogenarian author. The focus of attention seems to be on such events and personalities which have largely contributed to the emergence of a resurgent India with special reference to the cultural activities of Mithila, Maithil and Maithili. The author had the proud privilege of having contacts with a number of great scholars and leaders of our country like Sir Jadunath Sircar, M.M. Ramavatar Sharma, Babu Braj Kishore Prasad, 'Sarvodaya Saint' Pandit Ram Nandan Mishra and a host of others.

Occupying for a long time the highest tower of Raj Darbhanga he has very conveniently viewed the panorama of his society and has very interestingly caught the same in these pages. For the history of Maithili literature, it will be a rich source of information. Free and frank in his heart and lucid in his style, the author has succeeded in shaping it into a fine piece of literature.

Apart from the description of literary and political events, a sufficient portion of the book deals with Darbhanga Raj. His description of the Maharajas and the qualities of their head and heart is interesting. The magnanimity, nationalism and dynamism of Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh in those stormy days particularly leaves an indelible impact on the reader's mind.

1976 Award

Vaidyanath Malik 'Vidhu'

Sitayana

Sitayana Prakashan, Rajnagar (Madhubani); 1974; xvi+360 pp.; Rs. 25.00

> "Sri Vaidyanath Mallik 'Vidhu', distinguished Maithili poet and journalist, was born in 1912 at the village Viraul in Madhubani, Bihar. All his early writings were destroyed in the earthquake which devastated the province in 1934. Though his poems have been published in magazines, the Award-winning epic is his only published book so far, which was written during a span of eleven years. Sri 'Vidhu' published and edited a number of periodicals in Maithili and Hindi. He experimented with several vocations before retiring as the Manager for the Rajnagar region of the erstwhile Darbhanga State.
>
> *Sitayana* is considered an outstanding contribution to Maithili literature for its successful handling of the theme, lucidity of expression, idealism and noble portrayals."

This epic *Sitayana* is divided into seven cantos and each canto is again sub-divided into seven cantos. Hence, the poet has given its name as 'Pratham Saptasargi Suman'.

In the first canto, the poet has given an excellent description of Mithila, its wonderful beauty in all the seasons of the year. He has also depicted the social customs and systems of Mithila. In the second sub-canto of the first canto, he has portrayed Sita as *Adyashakti* and in the third sub-canto he gives the story as to how Sita comes in the womb of the earth. In the fourth sub-canto Narada comes to meet Brahma and other deities and throws light on the importance of labour. In the fifth sub-canto, light is shed on *atma-darshan* (self-realization). In the sixth sub-canto, Janaka decides to hold *Shrama-Yajna* in consultation with great sages present in the meeting. And in the seventh sub-canto the Sita-*avatara,* coming of Sita on the earth, has been described.

In the second Saptasargi Suman, Sita's *bal-leela* has been depicted. In the third Saptasargi Suman, Sita's marriage with Ram, in the fourth Saptasargi Suman Sita's *van-gaman*, in the fifth Saptasargi

Suman, *Sitaharan*, in the sixth Saptasargi Suman, Sita's *agni-pariksha* and in the seventh Saptasargi Suman, Sita's *dharani-pravesh* have been described vividly.

Sitayana is like the *Ramayana* in which Sita's character is more noble, saintly and ideal than Ram's. She has been portrayed as *Mahamaya* and *Adyashakti*.

This epic has all the virtues of an epic as enunciated by the critics of Sanskrit literature. The poet's clear expression in well chosen words, his ideal and vivid description in lucid style, his characterisation--all are very charming. His heart-rending pathos depicted in this piece of art is really moving. Its natural flow of language adds exceptional beauty to this epic.

Lekha Nath Mishra

1977 Award

Rajeshwar Jha

Avahatta: Udbhava O Vikas

Maithili Sahitya Samsthana, Patna; 1976; xvi+111 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"The late Sri Rajeshwar Jha, distinguished Maithili literary historian, was born at Rasuar in Bihar in 1923. He took a job in the erstwhile Darbhanga State after his matriculation in 1941 and served in different capacities before joining the Bihar Research Society in 1952. He was its Office Secretary when he died on 23 April 1977. He wrote 20 books in Maithili and Hindi. He had a good background in Sanskrit and wrote scores of articles on Mithilog and Indology, besides editing *Mithila-Bharati*, a research quarterly published by the Maithili Sahitya Sansthan.

Avahatta : Udbhava O Vikas is considered an outstanding contribution to Maithili literature for its authenticity, logical analysis, scholarly approach, originality and meaningful treatment of the theme."

Avahatta:Udbhava O Vikas is a valuable piece of research work. For the first time in the Maithili language an attempt was made by a scholar to trace the origin and development of Avahatta (a folk language prevalent in the eastern region of India), as literary vehicle from the seventh to the fifteenth century A.D.

The work is divided into four chapters with a conclusion at the end. In the first chapter, the writer has tried to establish the distinguishing phonological features like change in the nasalisation of vowels, elision of vowels and consonants, words in place of post position's original verbal forms, etc. of the Avahatta language.

In the succeeding chapters, Padas of different Siddhas, Ukti-Viyakti Prakaran of Damodar, Sandesh Rashak of Addahman, Bajjalagg, a collection of sayings compiled by Switambar Muni Jayaballabh, Tharu folk songs of Nepal, Dakvachanavali of Jeevanand Thakur, Varma Ratnakar of Jyotirhisvar, songs of Parijat Haran of Umapati, Kirtilata, Kirtipataka and songs of Goraksha Vijay—all of Vidyapati, Neminath Phagu of Jayshekhar Suri have been proved as the liteary assets of Avahatta languages.

Although the work suffers from repetitions here and there, still it can be said without any fear of contradiction that it has contributed a lot to the field of knowledge available in Maithili literature.

Dinesh Kumar Jha

1978 Award

Upendra Thakur 'Mohan'

Baji Uthal Murali

Sri Nagendra Thakur (Chatariya), Darbhanga; 1977; x+152 pp.; Rs. 7.00

"Sri Upendra Thakur 'Mohan', distinguished Maithili poet and essayist, was born at Purushottampur in the district of Darbhanga, Bihar in 1913. He earned the degrees of 'Sahityacharya' and

> 'Sahitya Ratna' in 1937 and 1939 respectively. After brief spells of teaching and research in Sanskrit, he was associated with the Hindi daily *Aryavarta* and the Maithili weekly *Mithila Mihir* in Patna for 35 years before retiring in 1976. Sri 'Mohan' has published three volumes of poetry, one of which is in Sanskrit. He has also written scores of essays and critical articles for various periodicals in Maithili and Hindi.
>
> *Baji Uthal Murali* is considered an outstanding contribution to Maithili literature for its lyrical quality, depth of emotion, variety of melody and metre, and tender diction."

As the most recent link in the long and enduring lyric tradition of Maithili literature, *Baji Uthal Murali* seems to hold an undiminished appeal. The poet is a lyricist whose poetry is remarkable not only for its softness of words, manipulation of rhymes and sweetness of melody, but also for its implied suggestions, mature ideas and robust optimism. Thus his poetry combines elements which affect the heart as powerfully as the head. The collection comprises 101 songs which not only deal with the problems confronting the country but also suggest the remedial way out. Even if the elements of contemporaneity are not taken into consideration, the poems have the power to move us on the emotional plane. The songs include some nature-songs and love-songs which are doubtlessly in the traditional vein, but these, too, are resonant with the echo of the present. But the most significant poems in the collection are those which convey the message of creative construction which might lead us towards the glorious path of progress and prosperity. The poems greet the new generation and urge the teeming youths to employ their energy in the upliftment of the country. They are all marked by the poet's catholic outlook to strengthen the emotional integrity of the country.

An additional quality of the book is its elaborate preface in which the scholar-poet has minutely traced the long tradition of Maithili poetry.

Baji Uthal Murali is undoubtedly a worthwhile addition to Maithili poetry. It is totally free from 'isms' and can, thus, offer the true pleasure of pure poetry.

Bhimnatha Jha

MALAYALAM

1955 Award

R. Narayana Panikkar

Bhasha Sahitya Charitram

V.V. Book Depot, Trivandrum; Vol.I, 1928, 410 pp., Rs. 3.0.0; Vol.II, 1929, 402 pp., Rs. 2.8.0; Vol.III, 1941, 364 pp., Rs. 2.8.0; Vol.IV, 1944, 5.0.0 pp., Rs. 5.0.0; Vol.V, 1947, 428 pp., 2.8.0; Rs. 5.0.0; Vol.VI, 1947, 511 pp., Rs. 5.0.0; Vol.VII, 1951, 559 pp., Rs. 7.8.0.

Bhasha Sahitya Charitram (History of Literature) consists of seven volumes. Running to 3200 pages, this is a comprehensive history covering all periods from the earliest time (A.D. 9th century) up to A.D. 1951. It deals with all topics relating to the subject, and treats of all known poets and literary men from historical and critical points of view. Accounts given about the early history of Kerala and the development of the language as well as the theories in respect of several categories of composition add to the value of this work. The different literary genres—*pattus* (old songs of Tamil type), *manipravalam* (poetical works of Malayalam and Sanskrit admixture), *kilippattus*, *thullal pattus*, *kathakali* works, prose literature following western models, etc. are elaborately treated.

Studies on major poets like Ezhuthachhan (16th century), regarded as the father of Malayalam poetry, Kunchan Nampiyar (18th century), the greatest humorist in the language, as well as on *Kathakali* works included in this are long enough to be treated as independent contributions. As a one man work in a vast, and at that time in an almost unexplored field, it has its own limitations and shortcomings. But there is no doubt that this is a magnificent contribution to Malayalam language as well as the history of Kerala.

Some other historical works, the foremost of which is the five-volumed *Kerala Sahitya Charitram* by Mahakavi Ulloor, have since

appeared but Panikkar's work remains, and will ever remain, an invaluable source book for students of Malayalam literature.

Suranad Kunjan Pillai

1956 Award

I.C. Chacko

Paniniya Pradyotam

Mar Themotheus Memorial Printing and Publishing House Ltd., Ernakulam; 1955; iv+779 pp.; Rs. 25.0.0

Paniniya Pradyotam (The Work of Panini Illuminated) is the first modern exposition in Malayalam of the ancient system of Sanskrit grammar founded by Panini. It is an outstanding contribution to Sanskrit grammatical literature in Malayalam, different from the usual run of commentaries on *Paniniyam*.

A self-tutored scholar in Sanskrit grammar and one endowed with a scientific attitude, his approach to the ancient grammar-system is novel and original. Malayalam, though belonging to the Dravidian family, has a vocabulary that is steeped in Sanskrit. H.H. Wilson, Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford noted this indebtedness in the last century and stressed the need for a sound knowledge of Sanskrit for the study of the languages of South India. Kerala has contributed over the centuries a vast corpus of commentaries and expositons of Sanskrit grammar. The first phase in the resurgence of grammatical scholarship started in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries which was followed by another upsurge towards the close of the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth centuries. I.C. Chacko makes his appearance on this scene in the third phase which closely followed the second phase in the middle of the century. This phase has not exhausted itself even now.

The author of *Paniniya Pradyotam* set before himself two objectives which he could nearly fulfil in his work–one was to equip the ordinary writers in Malayalam with sufficient knowledge of the correct forms of Sanskrit words and the derivations of loan-words from Sanskrit in Malayalam. He desired to control, if not to put an end to, the

'abuse' of Sanskrit wantonly practised by even competent writers in Malayalam. Secondly, he wanted to introduce a more easily manageable pedagogy in teaching Sanskrit grammar. The grammar of Panini and the method of its teaching established in its commentaries reveal an obsession with terseness which reached the limits of not only ambiguity, but even incomprehensibility. But Chacko started his explanatory exercise from the opposite end where terseness was sacrificed for the sake of clarity, since his intention was that the student should actually understand Panini and not be mystified by him. 'Panini without tears' was his watchword. So long as this was his declared goal, he did not fight shy of even resorting to prolixity and repetition in his explanations. Happy analogies and illustrations abound in this commentary.

In other respects the author does not deviate much from the conventional methods of Panini's annotations. The customary indices of *Sutra*, *Dhatu*, *Gana*, etc. are appended, along with other tables useful to the student for reference.

Paniniya Pradyotam is a landmark in the history of Sanskrit-learning in Kerala. It is evident that its leaning towards intelligibility and lucidity has definitely made an impact on works on Sanskrit grammar published afterwards in Malayalam.

Sukumar Azhicode

1957 Award

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai

Chemmeen

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1956; 337 pp.; Rs. 3.0.0

"The novel depicts the life of humble fisher-folk in the coastal region of Kerala. The author, Sri Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (b. 1914 in Ambalapuzha, Kerala), is a leading short story writer and novelist. He was one of the original promoters of the Progressive Writers' Association in Kerala. Most of his

stories and novels portray life of the peasants and the working class. Agriculturist by tradition, lawyer by profession and writer by choice, Sri Thakazhi is well known for his dynamic approach to problems social and political. The Akademi has selected his earlier novel *Rantidangazhi* for translation in the major Indian languages. The Hindi version, *Do Ser Dhan*, is already published."

Chemmeen tells a simple story about the fisher-folk on the Kerala seashore. It can be read almost as a fable, the tragedy of a Hindu fisherwoman who is in love with a Muslim boy, but is married to a fisherman. The narrow-minded parents, especially the overambitious father of the girl conspires with fate to wreck the domestic happiness of the woman Karuthamma and her husband Palani. Pareekutti, the lover, is a contractor by occupation, but is idealistic and impractical, especially in his dealings with Karuthamma's father. The latter borrows money from Pareekutti and amasses a good fortune but forgets the benevolence of her daughter's lover. Karuthamma is given in marriage to Palani, but she keeps alive her love for Pareekutti. Karuthamma's mother dies, and her father marries again. His life style also changes to suit his elevated status. But fortune never smiles on anyone for long. The whole edifice of his ambition, built up on a betrayal of trust collapses. Palani comes to learn about Karuthamma's attachment to Pareekutti. One day he goes out into the sea, but does not return. Karuthamma meets Pareekutti about the same time. They too are drowned.

Chemmeen is a work that looks both backward and forward. It looks back at the earlier works of Thakazhi like *Thottiyude Makan* (Scavenger's Son) and *Rantidangazhi* (Two Measures) in its concern for characters from the lower strata of society. But it also looks forward to later works like *Ouseppinte Makkal* (The Children of Ouseph, 1959) and *Kayar* (Coir, 1978) in its freedom from political and ideological obsession. It is not Thakazhi's greatest work; but it is likely to continue to be his most popular work.

K. Ayyappa Paniker

1958 Award

K.P. Kesava Menon

Kazhinja Kalam

Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., Calicut; 1957; vi+368 pp.; Rs. 4.8.0

"Sri K.P. Kesava Menon (b. 1886 in Palghat, Kerala) was a veteran journalist and writer; working president of Kerala Sahitya Akademi and editor *Mathrubhumi*. He was High Commissioner for India in Ceylon for some time."

An ardent patriot and a serious student of current affairs, Kesava Menon was sucked into the whirlpool of nationalist politics as soon as he set up practice as a Barrister at Calicut in 1975.

While a student, Keseva Menon had composed a short biography of Lala Lajpat Rai in 1908. It was in order to popularise the programme of the Congress that he wrote the biographies of Gokhale (1915), Tilak (1916) and Gandhi (1920). The same was the purpose of his starting the Malayalam paper *Mathrubhumi*.

Absorption in politics landed Keseva Menon in absolute penury. His wife and one young daughter died of tuberculosis. In spite of these misfortunes he continued to take lively interest in public affairs and became one of the leaders of Indians in the Far East.

Under the Japanese occupation of Malaya, Kesava Menon became a member of the Council of Action and Information Minister of the Indian Independence League.

In 1948 he returned to Calicut and resumed the editorship of his beloved *Mathrubhumi*. Keeping away from party politics, he assumed the leadership of the movement for the unification and cultural regeneration of Kerala. In 1951-52 he had also had a short stint as India's High Commissioner in Ceylon.

As Editor of *Mathrubhumi*, he played a very active and salutary role in all literary, cultural and social activities in Kerala. He was a prolific writer, and even after becoming totally blind towards 1955, his literary pursuits remained uninterrupted.

Kazhinja Kalam (The Time that was) his autobiography, first published in 1957 was an instant success.

Only great men can write great autobiographies. Kesava Menon was great in every sense of that word. He had come in intimate contact with some of the greatest men and women of the twentieth century. He had experienced both the sublime and the ridiculous in human life. Having an insatiable curiosity he read avidly in world classics, and endowed with prodigious power of memory, could put his erudition to good use. Kesava Menon was master of a very simple yet very beautiful and effective style. While going through his autobiography one still feels the warm presence of his vibrant personality.

N.V. Krishna Warrior

1960 Award

'Uroob' (P.C. Kuttikrishnan)

Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1958; 513 pp.; Rs. 18.50

> "Sri P.C. Kuttikrishnan *alias* Uroob (b. 1915) is a leading novelist and short story writer in the language. *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum*, which literally means 'Beautiful Women, Beautiful Men', is a novel depicting the social life in Malabar during the period between the two world wars. The author has given an accurate picture of a society in transition and has brought out vividly and with the help of a large number of characters, drawn with skill and conviction, the juxtaposition of ancient forces in decay with the emergence of new incentives of progress. For the vastness of its canvas depicting a long period in the life of Kerala, this work has given a new dimension to the Malayalam novel."

In the novel *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum,* Uroob's idea is not simply to tell a tale, but to discover and unravel the beauty in all his characters in spite of their tragic weaknesses. He proclaims this

at the very outset by quoting a *sloka* from the poet Edasseri–his friend, philosopher and guide–which says that man is charming in all his expressions, noble or petty, as long as the yardstick is imperfect on our side.

In this novel, is portrayed the life of people in a small town of colonial Malabar during the second quarter of the present century, culminating in the period of the Second World War, just before Independence. Though the fortunes of the dreamy idealist Viswam and the down-to-earth practical Radha brought together from childhood by a strange fate, provide the string which connects all the events and characters; there is no hero or heroine–all are heroes and heroines. Through the closely interwoven lives of several people–aristocratic ladies, professional dancers, converts to Islam, capitalists, workers, trade unionists, etc.–the sprawling saga of a society is recreated. The sensitive alienated soul of Viswam and the silently suffering and loving Radha were perhaps meant to symbolise the spirit of India in its latest manifestation but they are surrounded by others who share the same spirit in smaller or greater measure. It is the hidden humanity or nobility which comes out in occasional moments of crisis that really makes them all charming, whether they are locked in violent conflict or they go their different ways in protest. Somehow these people cannot run away from each other or from their destiny, which turns out to be the expression of their character. They cannot solve their problems, but we sympathise with them as we see them struggle heroically in human bondage.

The situations are quite realistic, but the poet-philosopher novelist subtly provides an aura of romantic charm for characters and events thus conveying the very personal message contained in the title through every sentence.

Classes and generations are confronting each other against a background of modern education, unemployment, trade unionism, and the persistence of old-world values in the changing society of northern Kerala. The measured movements of Bharatanatyam and the soulful notes of classical music mingle with the fist-shaking and slogan-shouting processions of the factory workers. The impersonal proccess of social tansformation inflicts much pain on tender hearts but the heart is capable of releasing its own remedy, i.e. the wonder-balm of love. The supreme glory and grace of love slowly permeates the atmosphere, like the sunrise on a wild riverbank, in the midst of the gloomiest experience.

The magic of Uroob's art–inherent in the poetry of his words and the subtlety of his narrative technique is such that it endows mundane life with a dream-like quality. Is he revealing the reality within reality, or is it merely the illusory gift of a golden imagination which is bound to fade away in the broad day-light of routine life? This is a personal question which demands a personal answer from each reader, however, this novel, or philosophical essay which reads like a novel, produced an imprint which is indelible.

M.G.S. Narayanan

1963 Award

G. Sankara Kurup

Viswadarshanam

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1961 (Second Edition); 100 pp.; Rs. 1.50

> "Sri G. Sankara Kurup (b. 1901) is a distinguished poet in Malayalam. Entering the field of literature in his early youth, Sri Kurup soon became a leading exponent of modern Malayalam poetry and has enriched his language for more than four decades, publishing more than seventeen collections of original poems besides several translations from Indian and foreign poets. An acknowledged master in the field of poetry, Sri Kurup has made lasting contribution to Malayalam literature by a happy combination of traditional values and modern scientific outlook.
>
> The Award book *Viswadarshanam* is the latest collection of his poems and contains exquisite and extremely chiselled pieces of poetical maturity full of vigour and sweetness."

A collection of ten fairly long lyrical poems, *Viswadarshanam* provides outstanding samples of the main characteristics of G. Sankara Kurup's poetry–the mystic overtones and metaphysical dimensions, numinous depth and response to science, contemporary political situation and economic condition.

The first poem, "Viswadarshanam" is a vision of the cosmic universe. The combination of the religious numinosum and the scientific devoutness in the poem gives it a mystic grandeur. "Yasodhara" is a superb lyrical composition which depicts the emotional storms that overpower Yasodhara when, after eight long years, she meets the prince who attained enlightenment, and the yogic calm she attains when her son follows the father. The Uncle in the poem "Uncle Blesses" is the moon. In the poem scientific facts and poetry's magic are beautifully blended. "Sandalwood Cot" is acclaimed as the best of Kurup's 'Song-poems'. The story taken from popular folk-lore, is of a girl brought up by an eagle in a hole on a sandalwood tree in the forest. Once discovered by men, she is taken away and the mother-bird dies in agony. The eagle is also the mother-image in the collective unconscious and the tragedy is the tragedy of the human mother. Another poem, "Yellow Bird" is an indirect criticism of the evil of economic inequality. "The Wreath" is an elegy written on the tragic death of a poor pregnant mother, belonging to the labour class who was killed in cross-fire during the agitation against the first Communist Government in Kerala. "The Wreath" made the poet a victim of political wrath, in spite of his leanings towards the principles of Marxism. In the poem on the rose, the poet compares the function of poetry to that of a flower–the fragrance of both is meant for the world and, according to him, indifference to that fragrance is an unmistakable symptom of approaching death. No one endowed with sense and sensibility rich enough to accommodate response to poetry, can miss that fragrance emanating from this volume of sublime poetry.

M. Leelavathy

1964 Award

P. Kesava Dev

Ayalkkar

Sahitya Pravarathaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 409 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"P. Kesava Dev (b. 1905) a distinguished novelist, short story writer and playwright in Malayalam was born at the turn of

the century and Sri Kesava Dev has been deeply concerned with the social and political movements of the times and was actively associated first with the Arya Samaj and then with the terrorist and communist movements. He was an active organiser of the Progressive Movement in literature. Later on, however he broke away from the communist ideology for a wider and more comprehensive outlook on life and its problems. All these activities and associations have had a significant influence on his writings which bear a deep impress of the travail and turmoil of the times. Sri Kesava Dev's prolific pen has produced about fifty works which include two volumes of his autobiography besides novels, short story collections and plays.

The Award book, *Ayalkkar*, is his latest novel reflecting the changing socio-economic pattern in the life of the three major communities in Kerala through three generations. For its powerful characterisation and vigorous treatment, this novel has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

Ayalkkar revolves round the grand figure of Padmanabha Pillai, the head of Mangalassery Nair family, in the village Mukkonukara. Once when the floods ravaged the village he opened his granary to the poverty stricken people. There was a feud between Mangalassery and Pachazhi family. Padmanabha Pillai had three sisters Kamalakshi, Sarojini and Sumathy. Neelakanta Kurup and Damodara Kurup of Pachazhi married Kamalakshi and Sarojini respectively. Sumathy was married to a young man in another village. Kunjan, an Ezhava by birth was devoted to Padmanabha Pillai, Kunjuvareed the Christian convert though servile, knew how to earn money.

The social structure with Nairs at the top, seemed to be well-set and stable. But the matriarchal system failed the Nairs, also they fought among themselves and worked out their downfall. Common suffering unified the Ezhavas and strengthened them to resist the supremacy of the Nairs. The Christians educated themselves and also grew into good agriculturists and shrewd businessmen. Feudalism declined, a secular middle class optimistic, about the future of India, emerged.

Some of the typical ills of Kerala rural society are highlighted. The squandering of wealth by adopting all the vices that come with

that wealth not earned through personal hard work. Neelakanta Kurup and Damodara Kurup exemplify this. The tendency to go in for litigation on unnecessary minor matters purely for the sake of prestige and bolstering one's ego. Padmanabha Pillai is not limited to Kerala but with some variations can be found all over India. The ruin that strikes such families is heightened through the miseries of Devaki, Sumathi and Sarojini.

However, the novel does not end on a totally pessimistic note. A new order is slowly forming and those who adjust will survive, even flourish. Bhasker, Indran, Rajashekhran point in that direction. In *Ayalkkar* the novelist affirms his faith in the great humanist tradition of India and its power to rejuvenate itself from time to time. The plot is loose and betrays the intention of the novelist but the narration is both powerful and delightful, the dialogue is natural.

K.M. Tharakan

1965 Award

N. Balamani Amma

Muthassi

Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., Calicut; 1962; vii+50 pp.; Rs. 1.00

"Smt. N. Balamani Amma (b. 1909) a distinguished Malayalam poet and author of several remarkable works was born and brought up in her ancestral house at Punnayurkulam, a remote village in Kerala. Balamani Amma spent her early days with her maternal uncle, Nalapat Narayana Menon, eminent poet, writer and theosophist, who moulded her character and probably turned the sensitive girl into a poet. She studied Malayalam and Sanskrit at home under a tutor and later learned English by herself, mainly because of her desire to read poems of Tagore. Starting her poetic career early in life, Balamani

Amma published her first collection of poems *Koopukai* (Folded Hands) in 1930. But it was her second anthology, *Amma* (Mother), published in 1933 that won her acclaim. Instinct with lofty ideals these poems give expression to many subtle shades of a mother's love. Joys of homelife and mother-child relationship are her favourite themes, though some of her works include a variety of subjects ranging from politics and family life to spiritual experiences. In her later works the pessimistic tone of the earlier poems gives way to one of appreciation and adoration of life as inherently divine.

The Award book, *Muthassi* (Grandmother) is her latest collection of poems and derives its title from one of the poems entitled "Muthassi". Whether *Amma* or *Muthassi*, motherhood is the dominant motive and Balamani Amma is at her best when she deals with the subject. Delicacy of sentiment and a philosphical bent invest her poems with a special charm. For its sincerity, delicacy and depth of feeling *Muthassi* has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

Muthassi (Grandmother) is Balamani Amma's collection of twenty poems. It points to the period of life of the poetess, and some of the poems reflect the grandmother's view of life, which is not one of weariness at all, but one of mature love and wisdom. In previous volumes also, where 'the mother's view' dominated, the attitude to life was one of mature affection and sincere readiness to worship the good, the beautiful, the true, and the great. The poems reveal an introvert-feeling-type personality whose imagination is drawn to the inherent sorrows of life. She finds that violence begets violence and thus it cannot be the ultimate solution for the ills of life. She shows rare psychological insight and respect for love, sympathy and tolerance. They portray a quest after the ultimate truth which is almost like a spiritual pilgrimage. This volume also contains such sparks in the dramatic monologues of the puranic characters, Chyavanan and Mahabali. In the former, Chyavanan is the archetype of the seeker. The poem is the story of the evolution of man. Chyavanan was absorbed in penance for thousands of years and was covered by ant-hills. Sukanya, the princess unknowingly injured his eyes and he became blind. She married the blind old man and herself underwent severe prolonged penance, thus pleased

the gods, and regained for her husband his youthfulness and eyesight. In the poem, Chyavanan is a man engaged in the quest of beauty and truth. The explosion in the human brain resulting in the birth of consciousness and aesthetic sense was the greatest of all revolutions in the story of human evolution. Man lost his power of instinct when he attained the powers of consciousness and perception of beauty. Balamani Amma hopes that *Sukanya,* man's aesthetic sense, will ultimately regain for him the lost paradise and lead him to perfection.

The inner tone of all the poems in the volume is one of love, tolerance, sympathy and sacrifice–all the beauties of the grand mother-image.

M. Leelavathy

1966 Award

K.M. Kuttikrishna Marar

Kala Jeevitham Thanne

Marar Shasthipoorthi Aghosha Committee, Kozhikode; 1965; xxvii+320 pp.; Rs. 7.00

"Sri K.M. Kuttikrishna Marar (b. 1900) a distinguished critic and author of several works in Malayalam, was born at Kizhakke Marath Triprangode in Kerala. Sri Marar received instruction in traditional learning and Sanskrit at home. Later he was admitted to the Sanskrit College at Pattambi from where he passed the Sahitya Shiromani examination of the Madras University in 1923. Sri Marar then worked with the great Malayalam poet Vallathol for fifteen years in various capacities – as his disciple, family tutor, secretary, and Sahityacharya of Kerala Kala Mandalam. He joined the editorial staff of the popular Malayalam newspaper *Mathrubhumi* in 1931 and worked there for a period of thirty years during which he published his several important works of criticism, besides a number of translations. Having retired from *Mathrubhumi* he is now engaged in the study of the ancient Sanskrit classics.

The Award book, *Kala Jeevitham Thanne,* is a selection of Sri Marar's critical essays which bear testimony to his deep insight into literary values and his passionate concern with aesthetic sensibility. For his deep learning and original thinking the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

Kala Jeevitham Thanne (Art is but Life) is a collection of twenty-eight essays dealing with a variety of topics like rhetoric literature and criticism as well as the author's personal experiences in life. There is also an autobiographical piece "My Roots" along with the preface which serves to show how Marar happened to become a man of letters.

His essays are characterised by a mastery of style and creative skill besides an aesthetic sensibility and a reflective bend rooted in logic and reason. Marar looks upon literature as a tool, "Vidya" for acquisition of knowledge and refinement of the soul. To him life and art are but identical. The essay "Art–How It Influences Life" is concerned with this idea. In Marar's view there is nothing like 'objective' criticism. "If you can identify any merit in a poet, a poem or a body of ideas even if it happens to be a flaw in the eyes of others, you must lean towards those and boldly declare your partiality for those merits and fight hard for them."

The section "Appreciation of Poetry"–Kavyasvadanam–carries articles that make clear Marar's stand in response to the appreciation and criticism of literature. Noteworthy too are the reviews of classical works like *Meghasandesa, Svapnavasavadattam* and *Enoch Arden* and the dance-drama *Nalacharitam*. The two essays "Rama of Valmiki" and "Vibhishana, the Everlasting" boldly challenge the conventional notions that surround these epic characters. They are also example of the inexorable logic of Marar's writings.

Another aspect of Marar's views on literature is his uncompromising opposition to the 'Progressive Literature Movement'. When he argues that a writer is free in all ways and that he ought to be, Marar exposes his own negative approach to progressive ideologies.

M.S. Menon

1967 Award

P. Kunhiraman Nair

Thamarathoni

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1966; 310 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"Sri P. Kunhiraman Nair (b. 1905) was born in a cultured and respected family in Kanhangad, the northern extremity of Kerala. Sri Nair had his education at the Sanskrit College, Pattambi, and later at Sanskrit College, Tanjore. He then became a teacher of Malayalam in High Schools for a period of twenty-five years. On his retirement in 1966, he took up his residence at the holy hill of Tiruvillamala on the banks of the Bharata River, a place noted for its scenic beauty and natural grandeur.

Sri Nair has to his credit a considerable volume of prose and poetry both, numbering about two hundred works in Malayalam. As a poet he has endeared himself to his readers by a passionate love of his land and its culture. His *sasthipurti* (attainment of sixty years) was widely celebrated in Kerala in 1966. He has participated in the all-India poets conference organised by AIR every year and has been decorated with the Academy Medal of Kerala State.

The Award book, *Thamarathoni* is the latest collection of his poems and lyrics. For its burning faith in the higher values of life, its colourful diction and simplicity of expression, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

Thamarathoni (The Lotus-Boat) is a substantial collection of sixty lyrical compositions. The author was the most prolific romantic poet of the period–'Poetry came to him as leaves to trees'. This collection is a mine of such glowing poetic images, each one being "an intellectual emotional complex in an instant of time." These images are drawn from the distinctive characteristics of arts, festivals, social life, flora and fauna of Kerala. The emotional content of the poems presents all varieties of romantic agony and romantic nostalgia, the yearning to attain the unattainable, the eternal quest of the seeker-saint for the ultimate truth and beauty, the inexplicable overtones of certain

obsessions connected with a guilt complex and remorse, the righteous indignation against the deteriorating sense of values, etc. "The meanest of flower" can give him as to Wordsworth, "thoughts that are too deep for human tears." His response to the beauties of external nature had a mystic character similar to the one described by Wordsworth as the "serene and blessed mood" in which "one is laid asleep in body and becomes a living soul." Yet the storms of contemporary life, at times, broke the penance of this nature-mystic, and threw him into "deep distress". "Human sacrifice" is the product of one such moment. He deplores the deterioration of our sense of values :

Human kids burn in the fire of hunger,
I draw a huge salary and fatten myself
– Sacrifice me!
My sister has no shelter. She sleeps on the road side.
I build mansions with black money
– Sacrifice me!

The poet's imagination which was once over-saturated with the "Magnificent I" of the Romantics, is here awakened to the shocking contemporary situation created by the "Terrible I", the oppressor, whose sacrifice is visualised here as imminent and inevitable. Thus, this is a comprehensive volume illustrating the romantic and the revolutionary aspects of the poetry of the author. This volume also contains a learned study of the works of the poet, by an eminent critic, C.P. Sreedharan.

M. Leelavathy

1969 Award

Edasseri Govindan Nair

Kavile Pattu

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1966; 111 pp.; Rs. 2.25

"Sri Edasseri Govindan Nair (b. 1906) is a distinguished poet and playwright born in Kuttipuram, now in the Malappuram

district of Kerala, Sri Govindan Nair received his early education in various school of the district and then joined a Vakil's office at the early age of 15 where he is still working.

Sri Nair has devoted all his leisure and energy to creative writing and has been one of the pioneers of modern Malayalam poetry. He has so far published nine volumes of poetry and six volumes of plays. As a senior poet of his language, he has exercised considerable influence on the younger generation of poets and is held in high esteem by his people. His works have already received awards from the Government of Madras and from the Kerala Sahitya Akademi.

The award book, *Kavile Pattu,* is the latest collection of Sri Nair's poems which contains thirty-three lyrics of the poet composed over a period of five years. For its authentic portrayal of real life, for its innate sincerity and for its lyrical charm the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

Kavile Pattu (The Song in the Shrine) is a collection of thirty three poems by Edasseri Govindan Nair. The assortment covers a wide variety and range in thematic concept as well as emotive content. Everything in life from 'little domestic worries' with a personal note, to the utterly impersonal 'universal angst' finds a place in the themes chosen. The emotive contents extend from committed poetry with contextual significance and implications, to the voice of humanity that transcends limitations of Time. In the poem "To School Again", a father watches the preparations made with meticulous care by the eldest daughter on the occasion of her younger brother's first trip to the school. His mind travels back in time and reaches the scene of his own 'first trip to the school'. He indulges in a philosophic reflection on how such anxieties, sorrows and pains repeat themselves in history incessantly as every child is initiated to education. "Onam Again" is yet another travel back in time, to relive one's own childhood, when Onam, the great annual festivity of Kerala, was for children a period for mirth and rejoicing, a transient heaven on earth. In the poem "Bride", the local river is the bride who brings prosperity to the farmer's cottage. "The Gold Donation" reveals the ability of the Indian woman to rise to any occasion. She donates the precious little gold she possesses in answer to the call of the

nation at the time of the Chinese aggression. "The Ashes from the Pyre" pays homage to the nation's leader who moulded brave humans 'out of dust'. "A Mother Sings" depicts the pathos of long separation of a mother from her beloved son. "Welcome to the Goddess of Prosperity" declares the poet's conviction that an idea is to be worshipped as long as it sheds new light and deserves to be thrown out the moment when it becomes an agonising burden on the soul. "Markkandeyan" depicts the victory attained by the undaunted will and determination of Man in his ultimate conquest of Death, i.e. Time. In "Wind and Light" the depiction of the wonderful way of benign nature in showering her unfathomable love and care on the offspring of every species and her worship of the Divinity of motherhood, stirs the innermost chord of the soul. In "King Bimbisaran's Shepherd", the event described is the great moment of liberation and joy of the would-be victims when the Buddha succeeded in averting an impending animal sacrifice. It has obvious bearing on the genuine feelings of reverence, the vast majority of the oppressed and the downtrodden people had for Gandhi in contrast to the pretensions of the upper class. "The Song in the Shrine" is the most powerful poem, after which, the collection is entitled. It is an archetypal poem, an autonomous manifestation of the creative complex which has roots in the collective unconscious. The mysterious and tremendous appeal of the poem is not merely the effect of the supreme melody and rhythmic perfection. It makes us realise how powerfully we are seized by archetypes effectively used in poems. The two archetypes employed here are "The Great Mother" and the primordial concept of 'sacrifice'. The devotee, a boy of fourteen, sacrifices himself by cutting off his own head in order to quench the insatiable blood thirst of the Mother-goddess. There is a mysterious splendour in the unconscious response this poem evokes in us. It is as though we are carried away by a soul stirring call, 'the call of our blood'. The "Terrible Mother" undergoes a metamorphosis on account of the boy's sacrifice and the deeper spirit of sacrifice of his earthly mother, who takes pride in the action of the boy whose arm did not quiver when he raised his sword to chop off his head. The poem convinces us that in poetry and art myth does not loose fascination even in an age of science.

M. Leelavathy

1970 Award

M.T. Vasudevan Nair

Kaalam

Current Books, Trichur; 1969; 500 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri M.T. Vasudevan Nair (b. 1934) is a distinguished short story writer, novelist and journalist in Malayalam. Born at Kudallur in South Malabar, Sri Nair graduated from Government Victoria College, Palghat in 1953 and after doing odd jobs for a living for two years joined the well known periodical *Mathrubhumi* in 1956. He is now editor of Mathrubhumi illustrated weekly, one of the leading cultural journals of Kerala.

Sri Nair began his literary career in his student days, his first collection of short stories appearing in 1953. The same year he won the first prize for Malayalam in the World Short Story Competition organized by the *New York Herald Tribune*. Gifted with a prolific pen he has by now published twelve collections of short stories, six novels and a travelogue besides two volumes of literary studies. This has rightfully brought him a number of distinctions including the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award and the Malayalanadu Award. Acclaimed as one of the foremost writers of the younger generation Sri Nair has also applied his talents to writing for films and his screen play *Iruttinte Atmavu* has won the National Award as the best social film in 1967.

The Award book, *Kaalam*, is the latest novel of Sri Nair which has been highly admired by the reading public of Kerala. For its authentic portrayal of contemporary social reality and for its piquant characterisation, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

Kaalam (Time) is a novel in the romantic strain, unmistakably autobiographical in tone, depicting the life of a young man Sethumadhavan against the backdrop of the declining Nair families of Malabar. The novel has a philosophical dimension in that it depicts

the minutiae of life's experiences that confront the inexorable flux of time.

Sethu spends his childhood in his ancestral home. Good at his studies he wins several prizes at school. But even his father fails in giving him the recognition that is his due. He is of a poetic disposition. He reads Tagore's *Gardener* and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Leaving college, he is not able to secure a satisfying job. He joins as a trainee at the National Service Scheme, but falls out with the Director of the Training Centre and leaves the place. Then he dabbles in several thing in a coffee estate, at a petrol bunk, and with an itinerant gambling gang. At last he joins a rich man–Sreenivasan Muthalali–as an odd-jobs man. There he 'rises' in life, but ironically, that is his spiritual fall too.

Kaalam is a study in selfishness. Sumitra, a girl whom Sethu loved early in life, has this to tell him: "Sethu, you have, so far, loved only one person: yourself." This selfishness is apparent in his attitude to Thankamani also, a girl whom he really wanted to marry. The news about his mother's death does not move him nor does his knowledge of his brother's destitution. The novel is a study in boredom too, of the boredom that ensues from the absence of ideals in life and from the listlessness that is characteristic of modern youth. In a sense, Sethu of *Kaalam* is a continuation of the protagonists of M.T. Vasudevan's earlier novels: Appunni of Naalukettu Govindan Kutty of *Asuravithu*. But here, the self-centredness and boredom have sharper teeth. M.T. is careful to pay attention to details. His imaginative style envelopes the novel like a transparent veil and provides it with a different aesthetic quality.

C.P. Sivadasan

1971 Award

Vyloppillil Sreedhara Menon

Vida

Sahitya Prvarthaka Co-operative Society, Kottayam; 1970; 138 pp.; Rs. 3.25

"Sri Vylopillil Sreedhara Menon (b. 1911), a distinguished poet and playwright in Malayalam was born in the erstwhile state

of Cochin and graduated in Natural Sciences from Ernakulam in 1931. He then entered the teaching profession. He retired from service in 1966.

Sri Menon began writing poems at an early age and has contributed profusely to the literary journals in Malayalam. He has published twelve works including a collection of plays and a long poem entitled *Kudiozhikkal*. He has been a member of the Editorial Board of the Kerala Sahitya Parishad from 1950 to 1956 and a member of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi from 1962 to 1970. He has won a number of awards and prizes including the Soviet Land Nehru Award for 1969.

The Award book *Vida*, is the latest collection of his poems which is a testimony to the maturity of his outlook and power of expression. For its exquisite imagery and sensitive use of language, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

The word 'Vida' means 'adieu' or 'farewell'. What is outstanding about *Vida* is that it abounds in such examples, which are unmistakable even to a casual reader. Is the poet here completely moved by the disturbing conviction that it is time for him to bid farewell to many cherished traditions of the past with which he had maintained a passionate relationship?

Vylopillil in *Vida* sustains an element of obscurantism. On the other hand, he as ever before evinces a spirit of adjustment and accommodation, being fully appreciative of the basic need for change. The significant deviation is that now at every point of change there emerges a sigh from the depth of his heart. For instance, in a poem devoted to the very subject of change ("Parinamagatha"–The Song of Change), we see him wondering in the concluding stanza, why he should go on recounting his old memories. The spring has fled away; can he, after all, hope to hold it on with the slender silken thread of his song.... This, more or less, epitomises the mood of the poet in this collection.

Three poems merit special mention here, in the sense that they pay homage to the memory of three major poets. Extolling their glories in an idiom which is essentially poetic, Vylopillil in the end leaves an impression that the day of such geniuses are over, while he along with his generation remains here to deal with the mundane realities of contemporary existence. There is yet another poem, "The

Sultan and the Poet", in which Changampuzha, the Orpheus of Malayalam, is remembered. The undercurrent here is also that of an absorbing nostalgia. The poem "Ushassilekku" (To the Dawn) too is revealing in this regard: it records, with a sensitive note of self-pity, the poet's attempt at producing a poem; despite different stimulants, the attempt fails; then he reflects how genuine and generous was the process of creation for our saint-poets of yore. But their serenity of life is beyond our reach... A sense of loss can, therefore, be summed up as the abiding sentiment of this collection. Hence its title 'Vida' acquires relevance also.

The death-wish has never been a decisive factor in Vylopillil so far. Yet in *Vida*, one is repeatedly struck by the rays emanating from that sun adorned by almost all romantics. The poems here are mostly the fruits of a retired life, fed on solitary reflection. There are instances occasionally of the poet evincing an escapist tendency. The mild lament in "Ladam Tharayakkan" (Fixing the Horse Shoe) as to who can provide him with a pair of wings which is his immediate need marks a feature which he did not indulge in earlier. One wonders at this stage, of course, with a hushed sense of shock, as to what can be the wider implication of the term 'Vida'.

"Raktadanam" (Blood Donation) is in praise of the concerted effort of a village folk engaged in the implementation of an irrigation scheme. It is typical of Vylopillil to have conceived a poem out of such an unromantic theme... But, viewed against the underlying attitude of *Vida*, what is more important seems to be the statement in the concluding verse there: "the water sings gleefully while flowing into the new channels; along with it, my poetry also; but what it enters into in its exuberence is the old style.." Yes, this poem and another half a dozen in *Vida* are all in Sanskrit metres. An evidence of the nostalgic mood in Vylopillil, this also has to be noted as a deviation from his normal path.

Many poems in this collection such as "Ujjawalamuhurtam" (The Resplendent Moment), "Tengin Toppil" (In the Coconut-grove), "Geernavasishtangal" (The Decaying Remnants), "Onamutathu" (At the Onam Courtyard) are to be considered among the masterpieces of Vylopillil. *Vida* essentially represents a departure of Vylopillil from his earlier mood.

K.P. Sankaran

1972 Award

S.K. Pottekkatt

Oru `Desathinte Katha

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1971; 630 pp.; Rs. 16.00

"Sri S.K. Pottekkatt (b. 1913) was born and educated at Calicut in Kerala. Sri Pottekkatt worked for some time as a teacher before settling down as a professional writer. He was a member of the Lok Sabha (1962-67) and has travelled widely both in India and abroad. He is actively associated with the Kerala Sahitya Akademi and the Thunchan Memorial Management Committee, Tirur.

Devoted to the ideals of social justice and uplift of his people, Sri Pottekkatt has by now published more than 50 works which include novels, short stories, poems, travelogues and essays besides a play. He has received several awards for his writings from the Government of Madras and the Kerala Sahitya Akademi. Many of his short stories have been translated into various Indian and foreign languages and some of them have also been filmed.

The Award book, *Oru Deshathinte Katha*, is a novel depicting the life of the people in a suburban village slowly getting itself lost in the web of the expanding city. For its wide perspective and realistic treatment, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

Oru Desathinte Katha chronicles the changes that come upon a countryside over a span of three decades. Paralleling these changes is the protagonist's growth from infancy to manhood, from innocence to experience. The whole work is the saga of a suburb and fictionalised autobiography. The pattern is one of intricate interaction between the perceiving subjective self and objective social reality.

Sreedharan is the central figure. His initiation into the mysteries of love and sex, nature, poetry and social reality is traced very minutely in the novel.. Athiranippadam, the locale of the novel, is not a

"desam" of rich men. Most of the characters are from the working class – toddy-tappers, carpenters, masons, owners of small tea-stalls and those employed in saw mills. There is for instance Kulooz Parangodan who exaggerates almost anything that he describes. Kittan Writer is another type–one who periodically visits some families, entertains them with gossip and cleverly manages to eat his lunch as their guest. Sreedharan's own brother Kunjappu who tells tall tales about his military adventures in Basrah, Andi who is well known for his skill in drafting false legal documents, Balan who is beaten up by the police for alleged misbehaviour with a young woman, Velu who remembers every event of Athiranippadam–these are but a few specimens of the innumerable characters who lend variety and gaiety to this large little world. Kunjikkelu Melan the once richest man of Athiranippadam, is a character who has been impressively drawn. His extravagant ways form part of the legends of the locality. He is said to have delayed the performance of a play by half an hour as a result of his infatuation for an actress. To make a display of his indifference to money he once lighted his cigarette by burning a hundred-rupee note in his mistress' presence. He suffers a steady financial decline, and Sreedharan as a college boy often sees him lying on the roadside drunk and abandoned by his friends. He borrows money from others and at times asks for drinks on credit.

Oru Desathinte Katha is a work of great range and variety. The author's lyrical sensibility and eye for realism are fully borne out by a number of scenes in the novel. Its success lies in the deft blending of the protagonist's personal experiences and changing social realities. Sreedharan's story becomes inseparable from the story of his "desam".

R. Viswanathan

1973 Award

Akkitham Achyutan Nambudiri

Balidarsanam

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1970; 54 pp.; Rs. 1.25

"Sri Akkitham Achyutan Nambudiri (b. 1926), born in a traditional family of Nambudiris, imbibed the ideals of equality

and social change in his early life and came in close contact with Marxist thought. His earlier poems are remarkable for their romantic revolutionary spirit and vigour of expression. His gradual belief in universal humanism has now given his writings a mellowness and maturity. He has so far published more than two dozen works of poetry and drama besides essays and has received several awards from various literary organisations.

The Award book, *Balidarsanam*, is a long poem in five parts and reinterprets the myth of Mahabali in the context of modern life. For its originality of approach and for its effective use of the poetic form the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Malayalam literature."

Balidarsanam is a lyrical narrative divided into five sections. As the title suggests it is a flight of imagination into the philosophy of Mahabali, the mythical Asura king, who was deprived of his terrestrial empire and sent to the Netherworld by Vamana, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In Kerala, the popular belief is that the dear king rises from the Netherworld and visits every house in the land on the day of Onam festival. The theme of the poem is an imaginative conversation with the great soul who reveals himself to the mind's eye of the poet.

The first part describes the strange vision, the mythical story of the Divine deception synchronised with the loss of paradise for a whole race. The roots are broken and our existence is maimed, blood oozing out from wound on the legs.

The second part is the pathetic story of the speaking self who leaves the village seeking fortune in an industrial city. As a labourer in a textile mill, he toiled for years only to enrich the capitalist class. Declaration of lock-out throws him on to the street again. The will to live is not extinguished. He finds himself doing the devilish job of catching and killing stray dogs, so that his children can keep the wolf at bay.

The third part is a lament on lost values. In the fourth, the noble soul consoles him. The king is aware of the magnitude of the metamorphosis that the land has undergone through the years and the degradation of values; yet is not disappointed. "He is worshipped who can play the flute with the back-bone of others." "Marx is given his and Gandhi his." In the fifth part the Great One gives

his message, a curing balm to the ailing mind of the speaking self: "Love for fellow beings–the only path for the salvation of mankind." The quintessence of all values is in the spirit of sacrifice.

The long poem was written to be broadcast from the AIR in 1968 for five consecutive days during the Onam week. The poet has said that once he started writing the poem, the lines simply flowed from the pen as it were. It looked as though an unknown power from within forced itself out–an instance of the autonomity of the creative unconscious force.

M. Leelavathy

1974 Award

Vennikkulam Gopala Kurup

Kamasurabhi

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1971; 159 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Sri Vennikkulam Gopala Kurup, distinguished Malayalam poet, was born in 1902 and educated in Madras University. He began his career as a teacher and later held research assignments in Kerala Manuscripts Library and Malayalam Lexicon. During his literary career, spanning over last fifty years, he has contributed 36 works to Malayalam literature consisting of poetry, drama, novel, essay, children's literature and dictionaries. He translated verse to verse Tulsidasa's *Ramcharitamanas* from Hindi and *Tirukkural* from Tamil, as well as Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*. He received several awards including those from Kerala State Sahitya Akademi and Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha.

Kamasurabhi is considered an outstanding contribution to Malayalam poetry for the depth of feeling and sublimity."

The poems in *Kamasurabhi* written in different periods, present a variety of themes ranging from nationalism to a love affair, from

epic to squalor, and maintains uniform presence of mind, a rare optimism and a still rarer sense of beauty. Vennikkulam is almost of the same age as poets like Sankara Kurup, P.Kunhiraman Nair and Edassery Govindan Nair, but unlike them, is hardly remembered as a path-finder or a reformist. There was nothing new in his note, even in his metres. Although this negative quality comes foremost in our mind, Vennikkulam has his positive aspect which makes him a sentinel of certain poetic and cultural virtues and certain refinements in taste. These refinements joined to his simple melody have proved to be a floral decor of a mild yet notable fragrance unusual in this century when poets frequently resort to torrents and extremes. Here is a poet who never uses a forceful or harsh word, for he believes in the poet's lyre of soothing music. He is destined to see only the brighter, the lovely and the pleasant aspects of life, as he is convinced that a poet's field is limited, for artistic reasons, to these aspects. Here and there he leaves proof of having lived in this century of strife, for having been aware of reality around, and we see him dealing with issues like misery of man, unfulfilled dreams, disruptive forces in India's history, etc. But soon after, he could get at this point, he seems to be enamoured by the fancy of a New Spring, a New Wind, a New Dawn from Yonder Hills. He is contented that this New Wind will set everything right. And in his poetry man's virtue never ends and nature's beauty is never stale. This poet can rightly be credited with the unique distinction of being blissfully ignorant of life's inherent woe, or man's spiritual conflict.

The poet is almost bereft of what may be called intellectual substance, and to compensate this he has enough music, charm and tenderness. In beauty of metaphor he can ever excel Vallathol, but these metaphors acquire beauty at the expense of depth. In a sequence of pleasant narration he may surpass Vallathol but can never equal Vallathol in situations of human drama.

There are about sixty poems in this collection all centred on virtue and beauty at personal and social levels. Love for the country, sacrifice, our indebtedness to seers of the past, heroism, valour, artist's dedication to art–all these sentiments are neatly and charmingly brought out there.

P. Narayana Kurup

1975 Award

O.N.V. Kurup

Aksharam

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1974; 92 pp.; Rs. 3.50

"Sri O.N.V. Kurup, distinguished Malayalam poet, born in 1931 near Quilon in Kerala. His first poem was published in 1946. He is now Professor of Malayalam at the University College, Trivandrum. He has published sixteen books so far. He is the recipient of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award and the Sahitya Pravarthaka Award for poetry. He has also been given the Kerala State Film Award as the best lyricist in 1973. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi.

Aksharam is considered an outstanding contribution to Malayalam literature for its high imaginative power, freshness of images and its subtlety of poetic vision."

Aksharam is a collection of lyrics which reflects the many splendoured achievement in the genre in modern Malayalam poetry. There are 20 short pieces in this volume, including the first one, "Aksharam", which provides the suggestive title to this unique collection.

The title piece evokes by its totality of vision, a broad spectrum of far flung relevances, including the Biblical and Vedic echoes respectively of the word 'Aum', along with trite, unremembered nothings of mundane experience like the scribbles of the bird feet on the yard, the cashew fruit that waters mouths and the crescent that creeps up unsteadily like a toddler. The poet's silly, childhood ardours are all now metamorphosed by means of the word. And he is transformed into a votary of the soul of song, with its Beauty and Truth. Finally, he feels total identity with poetry itself. All the subsequent pieces are variations on this theme of merging and eventual identification, made palpable through a variety of themes, with a wealth of imagery, fresh and original word pictures, blended symbols, choice of diction and style which fully exploit the texture and suggestiveness

of the language. A deft manipulation of rhythmical patterns and a calculated metrical virtuosity vouch to the poet's modernist sensibilities as well. The uniqueness of the achievement is also owing to the blended culture it unfolds. Both occidental and oriental traditions fire his imagination. The second piece, "Phoenix", is for instance, on the fabulous Egyptian bird. Art arising from the embers of the past to indite resplendent new vistas of hope and joy. Another piece is about the destruction of Michael Angelo's *La Pieta* by a maniac. "An apostrophe to the flower, Night Queen," is a pure lyric par *excellence*. The pathos and melancholy clouding its nocturnal blooming and fleeting existence are bewitchingly immortalised in a diction which is simple, sensuous and passionate. Certain pieces bring forth the littleness of life. There flashes, even through them, the shimmer and expectation of a hopeful future, of a reassorted society, freed of the nether forces of reaction and exploitation.

This collection is worthy of the great tradition begun by Ezhuthachhan. It reassures one about the vitality and forward looking nature of modern Malayalam verse.

K. Sreenivasan

1976 Award

C. Govinda Pisharoti 'Cherukat'

Jeevithappatha

Shakthi Publications, Pattambi, 1974; viii+787 pp.; Rs. 40.00

"Sri C. Govinda Pisharoti 'Cherukat', distinguished Malayalam writer was born in 1914 at Walluvanad in an orthodox Hindu family but later came to be known as one of the most popular "progressive" writers of Kerala. He began as a primary school teacher and retired as a U.G.C. Professor from Govt. Sanskrit College, Pattambi. Sri 'Cherukat' joined the Communist Party in early 1940's and later became a staunch follower of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Fighting nihilistic and orthodox tendencies in personal, social and literary life, he

wanted himself to be known primarily as a Marxist author. Sri 'Cherukat', who passed away on 28 October 1976, before the Sahitya Akademi Award was announced, wrote novels, plays, short-stories and poems.

Jeevithappatha is considered an outstanding contribution to Malayalam literature for its inspiring depiction of the author's own life, the portrayal of a traditonal society in turmoil and the rise and triumph of a new socio-political consciousness."

Cherukat has contributed to almost every branch of literature--poetry, short story, drama, novel, children's literature and autobiography. Cherukat made his mark in all these fields. But future generations will remember him more for his plays, novels and the autobiography, *Jeevithappatha*.

A determined enemy of outdated customs, superstitions, social oppression, economic exploitation and casteist inequities, 'Cherukat' fought against them and suffered for his convictions. Therefore, his inimitable autobiography is a truthful record of his life and struggles, and also a truthful portrayal of the great transformations that took place in the society and politics of Kerala. Though his life span begins only in 1914, his retrospection into the history of his family gives us a glimpse of what life used to be a century ago. The joint family system and the peculiar Kerala system of matriarchy and the traditional landlordism began to disintegrate with the dawn of this century - the final blow to all these feudal remnants coming with the drastic land reform measures of the first United Kerala Ministry in 1957.

With consummate artistry and deep insight 'Cherukat' parades the struggles that led to these upheavals and fulfilments. His considerable talents as a novelist and playwright comes into full play to make the social and political history as enjoyable as a work of fiction. He narrates history not as a monotonous list of lifeless facts and events with anonymous players acting out their roles. He weaves the facts of history in enchanting portrayals of actual human beings, himself, his relatives, comrades and acquaintances. Every paragraph is as bright and gripping as those in any of his novels.

But Cherukat never compromises on facts, never tramples with events to make them sleek and ornamental. Unlike many autobi-

ographers, he does not try to gloss over when his own weaknesses and foibles and even none-too-proud episodes are narrated. Cherukat's transparent sincerity, truthfulness and ruthless self-critical attitude at once attracts and captivates the reader. No wonder, many critics consider Cherukat's *Jeevithappatha* as his masterpiece.

P. Govinda Pillai

1977 Award

N. Lalithambika Antharjanam

Agnisakshi

Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam; 1976; 152 pp.; Rs. 5.50

"Smt N. Lalithambika Antharjanam, distinguished Malayalam novelist, was born at Kottarakara, Kerala, in 1909. She had no formal schooling but was taught at home in Malayalam and Sanskrit and later she also acquired proficiency in Hindi and English. She has been active in the literary field for the past fifty-five years and has written several volumes of poetry, short stories, children's literature, and the Award-winning novel. She has been associated with the Kerala Social Welfare Board, Kerala Writer's Co-operative Society and the Kerala Sahitya Akademi for the last many years. A recipient of many literary awards and honours, her Sahitya Akademi Award-winning novel has also won the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, the Vayalar Rama Varma Memorial Award and Guruvayoor Appan Trust Award.

Agnisakshi is considered an outstanding contribution to Malayalam literature for its masterly depiction of a tradition-bound decadent society confronted with the revolt

of the oppressed, depth of emotions, economy of words employed in the portrayal of the spiritual growth of its characters, and its multi-layered meanings."

Agnisakshi is the story of a passionate and sensitive Nambudiri (high class Brahmin) woman caught up in the great social and political ferment of the past sixty years. The vicissitudes in her life are caused by the flaming intensity of her restless nature as well as by the turbulent times in which she lives. The young bride Thethikutty who in turn becomes the fervent social reformer Devaki Manampilly, the ardent nationalist Devi Behn and finally the zealous ascetic Sumithrananda Yogini.

The story is told mainly from the point of view of sixty year old Thankam or Mrs. K.M.K. Nair, the heroine's friend and admirer and her husband's cousin. Thethikutty is married to Unni Nambudiri of the renowned Manampilly Illom. He is young and virtuous, but orthodox; she feels frustrated and leaves for her paternal home, never to come back. Unni loves her, but he would not go against conventions and call her back. But his is orthodoxy at its best and he refuses to marry again. He gives up all material possessions, leads a life of piety, is dubbed a crank and passes away peacefully while praying in the family shrine. In the meantime Thethikutty's fiery spirit drives her from one activity to another, but she finds no peace of mind. The unexpected meeting with Thankam in the Himalayas upsets her at first. But the final meeting gives her a sense of fulfilment; she finds her unborn son in Thankam's son and bequeaths her *thali* (the wedding pendant) to his daughter, enjoining her to cherish it in all its purity.

Thethikutty's personal story is interwoven with the story of her times, especially the fortunes of her community and of our nation in a period of radical change. It also raises basic questions regarding the relationship between man and woman, the ultimate meaning of existence and the mysterious role of destiny in human affairs. Written in a simple swift-paced style, it fascinates us with its lyrical power.

G. Kumara Pillai

MANIPURI

1977 Award

A. Minaketan Singh

Aseibagi Nitaipod

Minaketan Singh (the author), Imphal; 1976; viii + 81 pp.; Rs.7.00

"Sri A. Minaketan Singh, distinguished Manipuri poet, was born at Imphal in 1906. He received his Bachelor's degree in Arts from the Calcutta University in 1930 and taught at the school and university levels for 41 years before retiring as Associate Professor in Manipuri Language and Literature in the Jawaharlal Nehru University Centre of Post-Graduate Studies, Imphal. One of the leading figures in the Manipuri intellectual life, he has been connected with scores of literary and educational institutions of the region. When he was a student of the fifth standard, he contributed poems in the first manuscript Manipuri magazine *Meitai Chanu.* Of his four published collections of poems the first two were issued when he was studying in the intermediate class. He has also written plays, short stories, historical romances, treatises on Manipuri grammar and has translated Tagore and Shakespeare into Manipuri.

Aseibagi Nitaipod is considered an outstanding contribution to Manipuri literature for its exquisite language and rhythmic patterns, superb command over the medium, creative use of the folk-tale and legend, and its faith in the immortality of love."

Aseibagi Nitaipod contains two literary ballads "Piye Thadoi", named after a bird and "Nungshi Wakheiba" (Love's Last). "Piye Thadoi" depicts, the immortal love of a bird 'Pi-Thadoi', believed to be the soul of Nongban, the well-known villain in the folk ballad *Khamba-*

Thoibi of Manipur. In his lifetime Nongban tried his best (even to the extent of committing vice) to get Thoibi, the lovely princess, who on the other hand, surrendered herself to Khamba, an orphan. Nongban eventually died of dejection. On his deathbed he implored his friend Khamba, the hero, to let his soul be permitted to chant the holy name of Thoibi (Thadoi)." The virtuous and kind Khamba permits him so that the soul of his friend may rest in peace. The story begins from the moment the soul and Nongban flew away in the form of the bird, 'Pi-Thadoi'.

Universal love may be felt in this long poem. Nongban could not get his beloved in his life time. The soul of Nongban wanders from place to place in search of her. But now his soul can find his 'Thadoi' in every beautiful object of this world.

The second poem portrays the immortal love of Itiben, the beautiful and Chalamba, the handsome. They love each other very much. But the father of the girl gives her away to a king who once saved him during a hunting expedition. The pangs of separation become so unbearable that she breathes her last. On hearing the news of her death Chalamba also dies. The two bodies are cremated side by side. Two pillars of smoke rise straight towards heaven for sometime. Then they meet in the sky. Thus immortal love of mortal beings gets united in heaven.

Through these stories the poet focusses experience and expression to worldly love purified by sacrifice and thereby a sense of *bhakti* (devotion) springs in. Through *bhakti* let peace prevail in this world of stark reality–so wishes the poet.

The book may be regarded as a Khanda Kavya. Sanskrit and Vaisnava poets like Kalidasa and Jayadeva inspired the poet. The strict sense of prosody of Sanskrit poets is evident all over the poem. The poet has invented some metres (*chhanda*) in Manipuri.

E. Dinamani Singh

1978 Award

G.C.Tongbra

Ngabong Khao

Paradise Publishing House, Imphal; 1975; 89 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Sri G.C. Tongbra, distinguished Manipuri playwright, was born at Imphal, Manipur in 1913. Graduating in Arts and Teaching, he served as High School teacher for 15 years and as College teacher for 20 years and retired as Head of the Manipuri Department and Vice-Principal, Imphal College in 1974. Sri Tongbra has written 35 full-length plays, 36 one-act plays and more than 40 plays for the radio. He is the playwright, director and president of the Society Theatre, Manipur, since 1946 and a number of his plays have won honours and awards. He was elected to the General Council of the Sahitya Akademi in 1973 and received 'Padma Sri' in 1975. He was also elected the President of the Manipur Sahitya Parishad the same year. His play *Lamja Parsuram* was successfully filmed in 1973 and another film based on his play *Khut-thang Lamjel* is being made.

Ngabong Khao is considered an outstanding contribution to Manipuri literature for its penetrating social insights, brilliant sense of the comic and the absurd, effective use of dramatic language and deep human sympathy and understanding."

'Ngabong Khao' is a Manipuri style of capital punishment putting a culprit into a sack and throwing him into the water.

In his three-act play, Tongbra creates a woman beautiful and attractive, who tried to lead an independent life. Uptil now she has been trapped in the so-called tender care of a tradition-oriented society overruled by men. The so-called woman's liberation is not still capable of providing her liberty. She is still in the sack of tradition – a bondage soft and harsh. Sanajaobi, the heroine (created during the International Women's Year) tried to opt for a tough life on her own instead of taking a beautiful death on another's lap. She does not ask for shelter but longs for co-existence. Tradition-bound men want to play with her. She does not resist but lets them do so, in turn, at times. She tries to know the weakness of

fellow-beings and when the time comes she takes advantage of the weak and the weakened. Very often she lets others, even her opponents, take benefit of her. She wants to float with the stream not against it, and instead of being suffocated in the waters of tradition and idealism she tries to fight against it herself. Tongbra's Sanajaobi demands approval by sacrificing her traditional morality. Why? Why is such a woman depicted? The survival of the fittest is the answer. If man is free, woman also should be liberated, so believes Tongbra.

Tongbra's sensibility and grasp of the theme are appreciable. His adherence to the spirit of survival is novel in Manipuri literature. But his Sanjaobi, a liberated woman should not be accepted in her entirety. Changes may occur in any field and development may come in any form. But morality is an element that will keep society and social values intact. Society needs Sanajaobi's spirit and her stamina but not herself. So Sanajaobi may be regarded as a 'photographic negative from which the powers beyond can print off the reverse'. Both the themes and plot are based on humour. Satirical settings and dialogue make the play all the more praiseworthy.

E.Dinamani Singh

MARATHI

1955 Award

Tarkateertha Laxman Shastri Joshi

Vaidik Samskriticha Vikas

Prajnapatasala Mandala Granthamala, Satara; 1951; x+260 pp.; Rs. 7.0.0

This work, divided into six lectures (as it was originally presented in the form of a series of lectures in 1949), traces in the light of the theories of anthropology and philosophy of history, the development of Vedic culture, the only comprehensive, unbroken force in India that, having absorbed elements also from other pre-Vedic cultural traditions in the land, continued to provide stimulation, equipment and values for cultural development for centuries right up to our own time.

The first lecture defines culture, outlines the terrain of India, the land of the Vedic culture, its flora and fauna, the history and the anthropological characteristics of its people, their heritage, language and literature, and their intellectual, social, economic, political and religious life as reflected in the Vedic literature. The mind of the Vedic people which is seen responding to beauty and awe of the nature in the earlier phase has developed in the Upanishadic period into an analytical faculty, the very foundation of man's growing control over natural resources and the growth of various sciences, natural and speculative. This development is the subject of the second lecture. The third lecture treats of the family and social organisations of the Vedic people; the fourth, of the culture as reflected in the great epics and the *Puranas*; the fifth, of Buddhism and Jainism and their contribution to Indian culture; the sixth, of the cultural movements in recent times Brahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj and Satya Samaj, as also the seers of the new age–Raja Rammohun Roy, Lokmanya Tilak, Yogi Aravind (Aurobindo), Mahatma Gandhi and M.N. Roy.

The author concludes his study by saying that the current of spiritualism flowing through the veins of the Indian culture through centuries can hope to meet the challenges of time only if divorced from its other-worldly context and effectively related to the life in this world.

Krishna S. Arjunwadkar

1956 Award

B.S. Mardhekar

Saundarya ani Sahitya

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1955; 216 pp.; Rs. 5.0.0

Saundarya ani Sahitya is a collection of essays on literary theory and criticism. The book is divided into three sections. The seven essays in the first section deal with the nature of 'aesthetic statement', 'aesthetic feeling' and cognate issues. The second contains ten essays, examining the relation between aesthetics in literature and the sources of literary greatness. The last section has notes on poetics and the views of Aristotle and I.A. Richards on aesthetics.

Saundarya ani Sahitya makes a total break with the traditional Indian concepts of *Rasa*, *Dhvani*, *Alankar*, etc. and for the first time seeks to deal with the fundamental laws governing beauty in arts with precision and rigorous logic. His theory briefly, is that the value of art consists solely in the pure patterns of the sensory elements like colours, lines, etc. Pure aesthetic satisfaction can be achieved without taking into account the semantic aspect of the sensory elements. Mardhekar insists on pure sensory qualities or pure forms divested of their meaning content. Aesthetic organisation of the sensory elements is realised on the basis of 'contrast rhythm and balance'. Thus Mardhekar stood as the first Indian exponent of a powerful European movement of formalism in arts. It is analytical, scientific and free from metaphysical assumptions and effusions. It is well said that Mardhekar's is the only writing on the subject which can be described as a theory.

M.D. Hatkanangalekar

1958 Award

Chintaman Ganesh Kolhatkar

Bahurupee

H.V. Mote Prakashan, Bombay; 1957; 442 pp.; Rs. 12.0.0

"Sri Chintaman Hanesh Kolhatkar was born in 1891 in Satara. Veteran actor and art-critic, he was honoured by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1957 for his services to the stage."

Bahurupee describes Kolhatkar's early years in Satara and Pune. His exposure to the best drama companies of his times came in a formative period of his life. It was not long before he realised that the theatre would be his true vocation.

A large section of Kolhatkar's book is taken up with pen-portraits of the many dramatists in whose plays he acted. Some of the notable among them are Khadilkar, Deval, Kirloskar, Savarkar and Vishram Bedekar. Kolhatkar is the only one who holds up a mirror to the most dominating personalities in the Marathi theatre of the past century. Obliquely, he also tells us about the political and social upheavals of the times; well aware of the role assumed by major playwrights in the freedom struggle.

But *Bahurupee* is unique because of the extensive section on Ram Ganesh Gadkari, the gifted young playwright who was both friend and mentor of Kolhatkar. Gadkari was a poet and a humorist; but the Marathi theatre knows him as a genius who remoulded the language of drama in poetic terms. Kolhatkar's is one of the most intimate accounts of Gadkari, the man and the writer.

In the years which followed the decline of the Marathi professional stage, Kolhatkar was once again united with a towering figure in the modern theatre, viz., Mama Warerkar. The actor-turned-autobiographer talks in warm terms about his association with Warerkar in the post-Independence era.

Bahurupee is thus a life-story whose subject is as introspective as he is receptive and reverent towards the men who moulded him.

Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni

who loves him deeply. Devayani's hatred for her makes her a symbol of revenge. Yayati dreads old age and the decrepitude it brings. He persuades his son Puru, born of Sharmishtha, to exchange his youth with his old age. Puru's self-sacrifice brings a new, liberating awareness to Yayati: Kama and Artha are important objects (Purushartha) of man's life; but they tend to run wild and go blind. Their reins should therefore ever be in the hands of Dharma.

It is in Kacha that the author's ideal of the 'new' man is embodied. His self-denying love, his moral fibre, and his constant struggle for perfection ultimately have their impact on the other characters, and make him the central figure in the novel. All his pleasures have left Yayati agitated, and wanting more of them. His is the restlessness of the common man of today who, running after material happiness, and without faith and values, has no peace.

The story has three narrators: Yayati, Devayani and Sharmishtha. This enables the writer to bring out the conflicts within their mind. His poetic imagination and a style befitting a noble allegory add to the worth of the novel.

Vijaya Rajadhyaksha

1961 Award

D.N. Gokhale

Dr. Ketkar

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1959; 350 pp.; Rs. 4.50

> "Dr. D.N. Gokhale (b. 1922) has made a special study of the life and times of Dr. S.V. Ketkar, a pioneering genius in Marathi literature. This biography of Dr.Ketkar is the result of devoted research over a number of years and presents a sincere and lucid interpretation of a remarkably versatile writer who was also the author of the first encyclopaedia in Marathi."

D.N. Gokhale has made a special study of the life and times of Dr. S.V. Ketkar, a pioneering genius in Marathi literature. Shridhar

Venkatesh Ketkar occupies a unique place in the cultural history of Maharashtra. Being a scholar, he wrote single-handedly the first major encyclopaedia in Marathi. The *Dnyan Kosha* remains a singular monument of erudite scholarship and learning. Ketkar was also a sociologist of distinction; he wrote several research articles on the subject.

He was, apparently, influenced by both the moderates and the extremists in Maharashtra and we can see traces of these contradictory influences in his life and works. However, he remained to the end of his life an ardent nationalist.

All earlier accounts of Ketkar's life fall into two broad categories: either they were near-hagiographies–uncritical appreciation of his life, or exasperated accounts by persons who failed to understand his complex personality. Gokhale's biography is the first major work to have avoided either of these pitfalls. Gokhale's biography is meticulously written, based upon a detailed study of all available source materials. He also interviewed several individuals associated with Ketkar. This has enabled him to write a biography rich in details and full of anecdotes which illuminate Ketkar's personality.

Gokhale's approach is that of a scholar rather than an artist. His biography is highly detailed but one fails to discern in it any clear awareness and understanding of the complex personality of Ketkar. His personality eludes Gokhale too. Perhaps a certain lack of imaginative or emotional involvement with the subject, inhibited the biographer from developing deeper insights into Ketkar's personality.

Objectivity is a fine quality in a scholar but often objectivity slides into indifference and thereby he misses out on the more subtle nuances of the subject of his study.

Gokhale's biography ends in a note of controversy. Gokhale suggests that Ketkar has perhaps gone senile in his last years of life. This has been challenged by other scholars and, more so, by Ketkar's wife who was prompted to write a sort of rejoinder to this biography.

Gokhale's biography still remains a standard work on Ketkar and may perhaps prompt others to work on him and bring out more fully other aspects of Ketkar's life and personality.

K.N. Valsangkar

1962 Award

Purushottam Yashwant Deshpande

Anamikachi Chintanika

Nagpur Prakashan, Nagpur; 1961; 112 pp.; Rs. 4.00

> "Sri. Purushottam Yashwant Deshpande (b.1900) is a distinguished Marathi novelist and critic. Advocate, professor, editor and legislator, Sri Deshpande has served the public in several capacities and has represented Marathi in international gatherings. He took an active part in the Freedom Movement and was for some time a Member of the Parliament. The Award book, *Anamikachi Chintanika,* is a work of meditative reflections and is marked by its sincere spirit of self-inquiry and an acute re-evaluation of some modern concepts."

Though P.Y. Deshpande started his literary career at a young age with a creative writing (*Bandhananchya Paleekade*, a novel, followed by eight more novels), it seems he found his real purpose of writing is philosophical contemplation. This was due to his intensive study of *Nyaya Shastra*, the six systems of Indian philosophy and the Upanishads. This opened before him a new vista of insights into Indian philosophicial thought. His emotional response to these works stimulated in him an urge to seek new and different interpretations which appeared more relevant in the present context. Thus *Nasadeeya Sukta* appealed to him as a revelation of the creation of the universe. Then followed the impact of the seven *shlokas* in *Bhagwat* which according to the author P.Y. Deshpande, emphasised that Bhakti (devotion) must have co-inherence with Jnana (Knowledge).

Anamikachi Chintanika (Reflections of a Nameless One) came to be written in a particular emotional situation, which immersed the author's mind in the problem of death and life. The book is not a doctrinaire approach to it but a somewhat aimless wandering in the realm of self-thinking, almost like day-dreaming, an unguided process, in which one thought is followed by another.

The book is noted for its originality of approach and for its new form of expression of philosophical but emotionally inducted thinking.

One should not judge the present book from a viewpoint of doctrinaire and rigid philosophical thinking. It is to be enjoyed as a creative work of art, expressing stray philosophical thoughts which may come to any person. The common reader seems to have responded so, since the book has gone into the third edition.

The book is considered an original and important contribution to Marathi language and literature.

A.R. Deshpande 'Anil'

1963 Award

Na. Pendse

Ratha-Chakra

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1962; 217 pp.; Rs.7.00

"Sri Na. Pendse (b. 1913) is a distinguished novelist and author in Marathi. A graduate in science of the Bombay University, Sri Pendse began his literary career in his early twenties and gradually gained power and maturity in his writings. He has more than ten works to his credit, eight of them novels. Sri Pendse is widely admired for his vivid portrayal of life in modern Maharashtra, particularly the Konkan region.

The Award book *Ratha-Chakra* is his latest novel and is characterised by his usual depth of treatment, realistic characterisation and wide human appeal."

Rath-Chakra (The Wheel of Destiny) is the most successful novel of Pendse. He has allowed this novel to grow by the inner springs of its vitality. Here, psychological aspects prove more predominant than the social milieu. He has made use of the stream of consciousness technique to plumb the bottomless pit of the human unconscious.

Ratha-Chakra is the story of a nameless heroine and the ups and downs which destiny brings into her life. It depicts the whirling currents and cross-currents which well up within the breast of the heroine in her capacity as a wife, as a mother and as a female member of a Hindu joint-family. It describes the struggle of a

widowed mother to build up her only son against heavy odds into a successful person. When she knows that she has achieved it, she decides to die because there is nothing more to live for.

The character of Krishnabai became controversial. It was thought irrelevant and abnormal. The character expresses the suppressed sexual passions of a childless woman. Some thought however, that it gave a new dimension to the novel. The novel has the distinct mark of a profoundly meditative art which underlines the assumption that the world is imperfect without the knowledge of the unknown. This awareness infuses *Ratha-Chakra* with a sense of high tragedy.

M.D. Hatkanangalekar

1964 Award

Ranjit Desai

Swami

Deshmukh and Company, Pune; 1962; 415 pp.; Rs. 12.00

> "Ranjit Desai (b. 1928) is a distinguished Marathi novelist and short-story writer. Educated at Kolhapur, Sri Desai started writing at the early age of 18 and soon made a name in the field of fiction for his vivid realistic portrayal and refreshing style. He has published more than 150 short stories some of which have already been translated into Hindi and Gujarati and have had wide popular appeal. He has recently taken to writing novels and has already published three, each distinct in its own way for its experimentation in form and technique.
>
> The Award book, *Swami*, is his latest novel which has achieved wide popularity among Marathi readers. It is a historical novel depicting the life and times of the Peshwa Madhavrao I. For its skilful use of the historical material and for its deep humanity, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

Swami is a historical novel depicting the life and time of Peshwas. Madhavrao, a Peshwa whose promising career was cut short by un-

timely death. The Peshwas, stationed in Pune, virtually ruled the Maratha kingdom, of which the titular head was the King of Satara. Defeat at Panipat (1971), and certain subsequent events; had weakened the kingdom when Madhavrao became the Peshwa at a young age. But he showed a dignity and astuteness beyond his age, and promised to restore to the kingdom its former strength. With great skill and acumen he tackled the problems of the State, which unfortunately were complicated by troubles within the family and court intrigue. But even as he had begun stabilizing his rule, tuberculosis, which too he had fought with courage, killed him. The novel gives a vivid and dramatic account of the Peshwa's brief and tragic tenure.

A diligent study of the available historical material has gone into the writing of the novel. The main events are drawn from history; and the principal characters are on the whole faithful to their originals. The author's imagination supplies minor details and certain secondary characters; and these help to bring the period alive.

But it is Rama, Madhavrao's wife, who steals the show. Still in her teens she brought strength to her husband through her love and her poise. Unable to bear his loss, she performed *sati* on his death. The creation of Rama is the greatest glory of the novel. Out of very scanty historical material, the author has given us this flesh and blood character of great charm. Her tragic end, as recorded in the novel has moved countless readers, and elevated her to near sainthood.

Vijaya Rajadhyaksha

1965 Award

P.L. Deshpande

Vyakti Ani Valli

Deshmukh and Company, Pune; 1962; 223 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri P.L. Deshpande (b.1911) is a distinguished Marathi dramatist, humourist and actor. Educated at Bombay and Poona

Universities, Sri P.L. Deshpande showed a marked aptitude for literature, drama and classical music from his childhood. Having worked for a while as a professor of Marathi literature at Belgaum and later as a broadcaster in All India Radio, he finally found his true mettle on the stage and in literary composition. Gifted and versatile, he has been active in both the fields and has won wide popular acclaim for his performances on the stage and in particular his inimitable 'one-man shows' which were recently seen in Delhi. A lively wit and humour and a refreshing originality mark his literary essays, sketches and one-act plays. As a playwright, he has breathed fresh life into Marathi drama by his now famous plays, *Tuka Mhane Ata* and *Tuzhe Ahe Tujpashi* which are rated high in post-war Marathi literature. His travelogues are distinguished for their innate humanity and disarming candidness. As a musician he has composed and directed the musical score for several Marathi plays and films. His versatile gifts have made his name a household word in Maharashtra and have brought him several State awards. An award of Padma Shri was recently announced for him in the Republic Day Honours list.

The Award book, *Vyakti Ani Valli*, is a collection of sketches and pen-portraits written in the author's intimate, lively and characteristic manner. For their sparkling narrative and innate humanity, they have been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

Vyakti Ani Valli is a collection of eighteen character sketches. One of them is of a faceless family of four whom some manual of good manners has reduced to marionettes. The rest present men who have remarkable variety–in status, for example: from a professor to a bootlegger. While the former is lovabale in spite of his comic incompetence, the latter is rather more so in spite of his long career in crime. From the incongruities in these characters springs the rich humour in the sketches, and the humour is the richer for being without malice.

It is the small follies and oddities of man that the author laughs at. The laughter has occasionally a satirical intent, but is muted. The author does not sit in judgement. He implies that it is presumptuous to judge our fellow-beings. Men, to him, are born different from one another, and the differences are accentuated by

the background and the situation. Such wide sympathy brings a rare quality to the author's humour: a sensitive understanding of the human condition, in which laughter can have a fringe of tears.

The characters come to life with their mannerism of speech and behaviour. These mannerisms provide not only humour but also as insight into the character. The sketches have little description, or direct narration, but a great deal of dialogue; and the dialogue is most lively, particularly where it is spiced with dialect. And it is a joy to see the author draw from language, as one would from a musical instrument, a whole variety of notes, like pun and irony and parody and what have you in the way of humour–and also warm emotion.

M.V. Rajadhyaksha

1966 Award

T.S. Shejwalkar

Shri Shiv Chhatrapati

Maratha Mandir, Bombay; 1964; 640 pp.; Rs. 30.00

"The late T.S. Shejwalkar (1885-1963) is a distinguished scholar, historian and author. Born at Kashedi village in the district of Rajapur, Sri Shejwalkar graduated from the Bombay University in 1917. A voracious reader and scholar of versatile range, he was passionately interested in the history of Maharashtra in which study he had his apprenticeship under. the late Sri Dattopant Apte. Sri Shejwalkar's learned introduction to Riyasatkar Sardesai's work *Nanasaheb Peshwa* brought him immediate recognition for his insight into the intricacies of Maratha history. In 1929 Sri Shejwalkar edited the Marathi weekly *Pragati*, and when that powerful journal of radical views had to suspend publication in 1932, he joined the newly

established Post-graduate Department of the Deccan College, Poona, as Professor of History and continued his research in the various periods of Maratha history and published a number of learned papers.

The Award book, *Shri Shiv Chhatrapati*, is Sri Shejwalkar's last voluminous work on the life of the great Maratha hero Shivaji. It was published posthumously. For its painstaking and brilliant research and for its masterly interpretation of historical data it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

Shri Shiv Chhatrapati is a monumental work on the national hero Shivaji, by the great historian, T.S. Shejwalkar. Shejwalkar's life of Shivaji could not be completed owing to his illness and subsequent demise. The brilliant preface which covers ninety eight pages is a striking feature of the book. Shejwalkar in his study of Shivaji not only brought a fresh approach to bear upon the study of the subject, but he also employed new methods and new techniques. He insisted that without an understanding of geography and terrain, a comprehensive grasp of the extent, area, the growth, as well as education, zone of influence of Shivaji's territory, administration would not be possible. He had also tried to trace the day-to-day movements of Shivaji by preparing regular charts with reference to sources. Similarly, he was aware of the great confusion created by the names of the various characters. The way these names were wrongly pronounced, the faulty information about the characters and places, his approach was a very painstaking, patient and diligent one. Attention to details is the only way to gain mastery over a subject. It was in advocating this inductive approach with a mathematical precision that Shejwalkar opened up a new path to the students of Maratha history . There could be differences of opinion about some of his interpretations as for example, the role of saints in Maratha history and the urges of Shivaji in conquering South India, but Shejwalkar's great contribution does not suffer in any way. Along with Justice Ranade, and Rajwade he takes his place as an original thinker on Maratha history.

Setumadhava Rao

1967 Award

Narayan Govind Kalelkar

Bhasha:Itihas Ani Bhoogol

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1964; 115 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri Narayan Govind Kalelkar (b. 1909) is a distinguished author and linguist. Born at Bambuli in the district of Ratnagiri, Sri Kalelkar received his degree of Master of Arts from Baroda College and then went over to France for further studies. After obtaining the degree of D.Litt. from the University of Paris he took up teaching French, and later, linguistics, at the M.S. University of Baroda. In 1956-57 he visited Michigan and Yale Universities in the United States of America and on his return became a Reader in Indo-Aryan linguistics at the Deccan College, Poona. At present he is working there as Professor of Indo-European Philology.

A zealous and painstaking scholar, Dr. Kalelkar has written a number of valuable research works on the problems of linguistics and has been actively associated with various learned bodies both in India and abroad in his particular field of specialisation. Besides a translation of Richard Fick's work on *Jatakas* into Marathi, Dr. Kalelkar has also produced teaching material for an intensive course in Marathi for foreign students and is at present engaged in compiling a comprehensive dictionary of Marathi language for the Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture.

The Award book, *Bhasha: Itihas Ani Bhoogol*, is a comprehensive study of the Marathi language, with particular reference to its relationship with its dialects, and is the result of a close and intensive research carried on over a long period. For its depth of understanding, objectivity of approach and its sensitive prose, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

Bhasha: Itihas Ani Bhoogol is a collection of Kalelkar's four extension lectures delivered at Aurangabad in February 1963 at the invitation of Marathwada University together with the last chapter reprinted with modifications from *Abhiruchi*.

Unlike the author's earlier *Dhvanivichara* (1955), a brief but technical introduction to phonetics, and *Bhasha Ani Samskriti* (1962), with its emphasis on the fundamentals for the benefit of the interested layman, the present book steers a middle course expounding principles, illustrating them with selected examples, and rounding up with a concise summary.

The subject-matter of the book is, as the title obliquely suggests language variation over time and geographical and social span flanked by an introduction to the systematic character of language and a resume.

The presentation is in the best tradition of nineteenth-century Marathi expository prose: it has both clarity, precision, grace and suppleness. It happily links abstract principles with the reader's familiar experience. The scholarly calm is broken occasionally by a passionate assertion of the values of scientific honesty and a vehement denouncement of instances of departures from these standards.

The history of languages is presented in terms of the methods of comparison, reconstruction, and statistical counts that serve to establish it. The geographical and social variation is presented in terms of the underlying processes of language divergence and convergence. The present reviewer feels, however, that the underlying methods and processes are not linked with one another in a developing logical whole. The nineteenth century is probably too much with the author.

The three books by the author constitute a landmark in the history of Marathi scholarly and literary consciousness in that they made the Marathi reader aware as never before of the linguistic underpinning of literature and of the intermeshing of language, society, and culture in the space-time of history. And they accomplished this with spirit and with a certain French elegance.

Ashok R. Kelkar

1968 Award

Irawati Karve

Yugant

Deshmukh and Company, Pune; 1967; 287 pp.; 12.00

"Dr. Irwati Karve (b. 1905) born at Myingyan, Burma, had her earlier education at Poona, and later in Bombay. In 1931 she received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the Berlin University. The same year she was appointed Registrar at the S.N.D.T. Women's University. Since 1960 she has been Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at the Deccan College, Post-graduate and Research Institute in Poona.

Endowed with a keen intellect and deep insight, Smt. Karve has specialised in sociological and anthropologicial studies and has published a number of scholarly work. Her studies of the Hindu Society and of Maharashtra and its people have been greatly appreciated. She is associated with many learned societies and was last year elected Vice-President of the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences.

The Award book, *Yugant*, is her latest work, an interpretation of the characters in the Indian epic the *Mahabharata*. For its originality of approach and for its brillant analysis the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

First published in Marathi and subsequently brought out in English in two versions, Iravati Karve's *Yugant* is a highly original addition to the critical studies of the *Mahabharata*. Irawati Karve was a distinguished anthropologist, sociologist and creative writer. *Yugant* therefore, reflects a complex and rare perspective combining the analytical ability of a social scientist with the rich insights of a creative writer.

The approach that Irawati Karve has chosen for her purpose is a psychoanalytic one. It is in terms of nine major characters – Bhishma, Gandhari, Kunti, Vidura, Draupadi, Mayasur, Ashvat-

thama, Karna and Krishna–that she offers her brilliant and often bold analysis of society and culture in the *Mahabharata*. These are not, however, character studies in the traditional sense, confining themselves to a catalogue of merits and demerits of a person. Instead, characters are treated as human beings participating in a larger drama involving not only a vast network of inter-personal relationships but also the conflicting claims of the individual and the state, the family and society, politics and *dharma*, good and evil, the real and the ideal victory and annihilation–the end of an epoch itself.

A thought provoking feature of *Yugant* is its last chapter in which Karve goes into a coherent general argument about the *Mahabharata* and its relationship with changes in Indian culture. Summing up the prominent features of the *Mahabharata* pointing out its harsh realism as progressively divorced from reality, Karve poses one final question. How is that after starting with the Vedas, the Upanishads and the *Mahabharata*, our society "turned such a somersault"? How could people who had once undauntedly faced the harsh realities of life, accept the "soggy sentiment" of *bhakti*? Irawati Karve does not give an adequate answer to these questions. But as she herself says that she has raised them to "provide thought".

Chandrashekhar Jahagirdar

1969 Award

Shrinivas Narayan Banhatti

Natyacharya Deval

Sri N. Banhatti (the author), Pune; 1967; 320 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Sri Shrinivas Narayan Banhatti (b. 1901) is a distinguished author, editor and scholar. Born in Poona, Sri Banhatti received his higher education at Bombay University where he received a number of prizes and scholarships for his brilliant academic record. After receiving the degrees of M.A. in Sanskrit and Bachelor of Law, Sri Banhatti became a Lecturer in Marathi at Elphinstone College, Bombay. Later on he worked as

Professor of Marathi at Morris College, Nagpur, and at King Edward College, Amraoti. He retired from Government service prematurely in 1945 to devote himself wholeheartedly in the service of his people.

A founder-member of the Hindustan Prachar Sabha founded by Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Banhatti has been associated with a number of literary and educational institutions as member and adviser and has presided over many a conference devoted to the development of language and literature. He has published over a dozen works which include monographs, treatises, biographical studies and critical editions of literary classics. He has also made a special study of *Jnaneshwari* which has been widely acclaimed.

The Award book, *Natyacharya Deval*, is at once a biographical study and a critical appreciation of the life and work of Govind Ballal Deval, one of the pioneers of modern Marathi theatre. For its painstaking research and critical acumen the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

Shrinivas Narayan Banhatti's *Natyacharya Deval* is the first comprehensive study of the dramatic works of Govind Bellal Deval (1855-1916), one of the architects of the early Marathi stage and an exponent of the tradition of musical plays in Marathi.

The book presents a critical analysis of all Deval's plays along with a brief biographical sketch of the dramatist, and a general assessment of his research has enhanced the value of the book.

In his brief life-sketch of Deval, Banhatti throws some new light on the dramatist's school and college years and sets right the record. The author also points out that contrary to the popular belief *Durga* was not Deval's first play. Prior to that he had prepared the script of *Ajitsingh*, and an adaptation of *Othello*.

This is followed by a play by play analysis of Deval's works—*Durga Mrichchakatik, Vikramorvashiya, Zunzar Rao, Sanshaya Kallol, Shapsambhram,* and *Sugunmanjiri Sharada.*

Banhatti's approach is comparative. His final evaluation of Deval's plays is reached through a successive examination of the original French or Sanskrit plays, its subsequent translations in English or Marathi and its adaptations for the stage. His discovery of the originals of *Durga* is a remarkable piece of research.

Banhatti's matter-of-fact style is occasionally laced with veiled satirical reference to shallow critical practice. Constantly, at the back of his treatment are the Sanskrit Natya Shastra and the western dramatic theory of which he makes a judicious use from time to time.

He is, however, at his best in his evaluation of Deval's musical classic *Sharada.*

V.R. Kanadey

1970 Award

N.R. Phatak

Adarsha Bharat-Sevak

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1967; 40+427 pp.; Rs. 21.00

"Sri N.R. Phatak (b. 1893) is a distinguished scholar, author and journalist in Marathi. Born at Jambhali in the former princely state of Bhor (now in Maharashtra), Sri Phatak received his education at Ajmer, Lahore and Poona and finally graduated from the Allahabad University in 1917. Coming back to Bombay in 1918 he started his journalistic career as editor of *Indu Prakash* and later joined the Marathi daily *Navakal.* In 1935 he became Professor of Marathi at the S.N.D.T. College, Bombay, and then in 1937 he joined the Ram Narain Ruia College, Bombay, in the same capacity from where he retired in 1957. On his retirement the State Government appointed him as honorary Executive Secretary of the Committee for a history of the freedom movement in India as also a member on several bodies for literature and culture.

A prolific writer and a gifted speaker, Sri Phatak has regularly contributed to numerous magazines and periodicals and has addressed many a learned gathering. He has written and published a number of books on the history and culture of Maharashtra as also on the lives and teachings of its great men. His long service to the cause of literature and journalism

has brought him recognition in his state and he has been elected President of various annual conferences and literary meets.

The Award book, *Adarsha Bharat-Sevak*, is Sri Phatak's latest work and is a biography of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, one of the builders of modern India. For its rich documentation and a profound understanding of the subject the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

Adarsha Bharat-Sevak broke not only new ground in the field of biography but was also a significant contribution to the history of nineteenth and early twentieth century social thought of Maharashtra. It is the first biography of Gopal Krishna Gokhale based upon authenticated and hitherto unused historical sources. N.R. Phatak brought to the writing of this biography his acknowledged skills as a historian and acumen as a literary critic.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, one of the greatest Indians of modern times, has been eclipsed in public imagination by the more fiery and volatile Lokamanya Tilak. Phatak's biography is an attempt to restore Gokhale to his true stature. This is the first biography to analyse closely the strained relations between Tilak and Gokhale.

Gokhale emerges as one of the great nationalists and liberals of India. Steeped in the liberal philosophy of Bentham and Mill, Gopal Krishna Gokhale was a constitutionalist and a moderate. Agitational politics held little interest for him. Phatak underlines Gopal Krishna Gokhale's humanism and his deep-rooted hostility to casteism and communalism.

Phatak's biography has not been welcomed enthusiastically by the Tilakites. However, on balance, Phatak has presented the political role of Gopal Krishna Gokhale in a fair and just manner. Perhaps the only fault, one may point out in the biography, is Phatak's failure to discuss adequately Gokhale's economic and political ideas which are yet of relevance and interest.

Phatak's biography is not merely an important contribution to modern Indian history but is also a significant landmark in the history of Marathi literature. His writing is marked by lucidity and preciseness. Phatak was a highly gifted writer of Marathi prose. One of the principal virtues of this biographical study is Phatak's empathy with

his subject and yet it is free from any attempts to impose the biographer's views of prejudices in delineating the personality of Gokhale.

K.N. Valsangkar

1971 Award

Durga Bhagwat

Pais

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1970; 144 pp.; Rs. 17.50

"Smt. Durga Bhagwat (b. 1910) is a distinguished author and folklorist in Marathi. Born at Indore, she received the Master's degree for her thesis on Buddhist jurisprudence. She was also Head of the Sociology Department at the Gokhale Institute, Poona. She now devotes all her time to her research work at Bombay.

Smt. Bhagwat is a linguist and is proficient in a number of foreign and Indian languages. She has published 21 books in Marathi and English which include her research into folklore and other aspects of Indian culture. She has received a number of awards in Marathi and is a member of Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti and Maharashtra State Board of Language and Literature. She represented India at the second Asian Writer's Conference in Tashkent.

The Award book, *Pais,* is the latest collection of her essays first published in 1970. Written on various topics, these essays are in the nature of musings of a sensitive soul in search of beauty and meaning. For its refinement of perception and subtlety of expression, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporay Marathi literature."

Pais is a collection of twelve personal essays. A cursory glance at the titles of most of the essays shows that the cultural aspect is predominant here. The titles are "Paisacha Khamb", "Pandharicha Vithoba", "Jogawa: Dwarakecha Rana", "Yamuna Kalindi", "Nainichya Pulawar", "Maheshwarchi", "Mahashweta", "Khris

Sangat", "Dongarmathyavar", "Unparakhi", "Asanna Maran Kali Rani" and "Buddha-Pralobhan."

The writer's excellent taste for arts like music, painting, sculpture, dance, and a deep interest in studying religions, philosophy, social sciences, Indian culture and history, folk literature and folk arts and Sanskrit literature are sharply reflected in her work. There is a harmonious blending of erudition and subtle sensibility, intellect and emotion, contemplation and lyricism in his personality. Durga Bhagwat is a liberal Hindu at her core but this does not prevent her from adopting a secular and modern outlook. Some of these essays are distinctly feminine.

The author's interest in travelling, visiting significant places, observing people, beautiful spots and monuments is cultured. Durga Bhagwat has described places and personalities of historical importance in a very artistic way. The impressions of these places and things are deeply rooted in her mind from her childhood or seem to have been obtained from her enormous reading and her visits to those places.

Durga Bhagwat's contemplative imagination invents multiple cultural meanings. This, she does through her intuitive capacity to explore new symbols. These become symbols of religious, social and cultural purport for her and they suggest a very wide range of meanings. The sculptures of Buddha reveal to her an optimistic philosophy of life. The picture of Mars becomes the symbol of sex; words like 'Sahansiddhi', 'Dikkha Kalindi', 'Karunyabimba', 'Jnyanamitru' unravel the mysteries in our traditions.

The dying form of the personal essay was given new life and prestige in Marathi by writers like Vinda Karandikar and Durga Bhagwat.

Chandrakant Bandivadekar

1972 Award

Godavari Parulekar

Jevha Manus Jaga Hoto

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1970; 159 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Smt Godavari Parulekar (b. 1907) was born and educated at Poona, graduated in Economics and Law. Immediately

afterwards she took to social work under the guidance of the late Sri Devdhar and later joined the Servants of India Society. In 1940, she joined the Communist Party of India and went to work among the tribal people of Worli in 1945. She is now a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

The Award book, *Jevha Manus Jaga Hoto* is her first and only book so far. Published in 1970 it has received an award from the Government of Maharashtra also. Written in an autobiographical vein, it is a graphic narration of the hard struggle of the oppressed and exploited tribal people of Worli for human rights and social juistice. For its deep humanity and vigorous prose style, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

Jevha Manus Jaga Hoto is a moving account of the struggle of the Adivasis in the Thana district in Maharashtra against the tyranny and oppression of the landlords. In this book, Parulekar has described the pathetic condition of the Adivasis–the grim poverty, the starvation and the ruthless exploitation by the landlords and jungle contractors who treated the Adivasis as slaves. If an Adivasi took a debt of Rs. 100 for performing his marriage and if he could not pay the fabulous interest he had to work a a slave to the money-lender for many years. During this period his wife had to suffer many indignties and as a result their family life was a woeful tale of untold suffering. The chapter on the liberation of debt marriage slaves, gives an excellent exposition of the consciousness of human dignity which dawned on the Worli tribe.

Godavari Parulekar who came from a rich Brahmin family, lived with the Adivasis, taught them to become fearless and had organised a historic mass struggle against tyranny and exploitation. She candidly states how difficult it was for her to adjust herself to the new environment. Parulekar is a Marxist and believes that constructive work would blunt the edge of revolutionary struggle. In this book, she has emphasised her point of view that the land problem can be solved only through relentless class struggle and re-distribution of land to those who have been deprived of it.

The book has political overtones but this in no way detracts from its value–a story of the basic human theme, the assertion of human dignity. The narration is lucid and is completely free from the

romantic idealisation of poverty. She is conscious of the fact that the problem of Adivasis in Thana is a part of the economic and social structure of our country.

The greatness of the book lies both in the subject it depicts and the idealistic personality of Parulekar revealed through the narration.

G.P. Pradhan

1973 Award

Gurunath Abaji Kulkarni

Kajalmaya

Popular Prakashan, Bombay; 1972; 271 pp.; Rs. 20.00

"Educated at Belgaum, Sri Kulkarni graduated in 1943 and received his Master's Degree in English in 1946. A teacher by profession, he is on the staff of G.S.S. College, Dharwar, for the past twenty years. Starting his literary career while still a student, Sri Kulkarni joined the front rank of short story writers in the early fifties. He has published about fifty short stories which are remarkable for their deep concern for human loneliness and the tragic destiny.

The Award book, *Kajalmaya*, is his fifth collection of short stories, first published in 1972. For its inquiry into human emotions and for its narrative power the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Marathi literature."

G.A. Kukarni has lent almost epic dimension and depth to the form of short story. His stories apparently concern the lives, mainly of the lower classes living in the border regions between the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. These lives are brutally cramped and miserable but are capable of sudden violence and massive suffering and still actively inherit a tribal and primitive ego. Some of his

stories also concern the middle and lower classes living in urban areas. Kulkarni's art is painstaking and elaborate, Gothic in its designing skills and awesome effects. His stories gain a haunting macabre quality which throbs with undercurrents of metaphysical speculations. His sense of humour breaks out in grotesque imagery that adds to their acid flavour. Kulkarni is a rare phenomenon in the field of short story, a dedicated artist sculpting out rich forms from the huge boulders of human suffering.

Kajalmaya defines more sharply and deeply the tormenting scepticism of the author. It makes an effort to evolve an absolute situational form of the short story in which the basis of existence reveals itself in a context-free but richly inlaid imaginative construct. The stories in *Kajalmaya* fall into three groups: first, the social-tragic, such as "Pradakshina", "Shevatache Hirave Pan", "Vansha" and "Purarapi"; second, social-tragic soaring into fantasy like "Anjan" and "Swapna"; and the third of absolute situations like "Thipka", "Kalasutra", "Ratna" and "Vidushak."

Stories which are grounded in a thick substratum of social reality depict the purifying aspects of existence which are viewed as workings of the inscrutable rather than products of social forces. Kulkarni's effort to reach out to the primitive roots of the race is made awesome by the evocation of fierce nature. "Anjan" is an illustration of the corrupting vitality of his imagination. In the third group of stories, Kulkarni creates an imaginative universe of power and studded beauty. The power is of elementary passions and the beauty of the devious construction of the fable and of a stupefying richness of language and imagery. The story "Vidushak" stands out as a crowning achievement of his art.

M.D. Hatkanangalekar

1974 Award

V.V. Shirwadkar

Natasamrat

Popular Prakashan, Bombay; 1971; 77 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Sri V.V. Shirwadlkar, *alias* 'Kusumagraj', is a distinguished Marathi poet and dramatist. Born in 1912, graduated from

Bombay University, he was a journalist and a poet whose work reflected the fire and split of the 1942-nationalist movement. He is the author of seven collections of poems and twelve plays. He has also translated Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Macbeth*. He presided over the Maharashtra Sahitya Sammelan in 1964, and Marathi Natya Sammelan in 1970. The play which is receiving the Award has been staged 500 times so far.

Natasamrat is considered an outstanding contribution to Marathi drama and stage for its characterisation and fine understanding of human destiny."

Natasamrat gave V.V. Shirwadkar tremendous popularity though its theme is not unconventional. One can say that *Natasamrat* is a fine tragedy to emerge after *Ekach Pyala* of Ram Ganesh Hadkari. The hero of this play is Ganpatrao Belvalkar, an old super-actor. Naturally, his ideas about 'acting' are thoroughly steeped in his 'own ideal image' of an actor.

Many factors are responsible for the hero's tragedy. The clash between two generations starts in the family and the old man with his old idealism and convictions is thrown away. Then he and his wife moved from his son to reside with his daughter and son-in-law. There again the same experience is repeated who found this old couple burdensome in many ways. Up to this time the story depicts the conventional struggle caused by a generation gap.

At this juncture 'Natasamrat' happens to hold an argument with an actor friend of his son-in-law, who visited his house. 'Natasamrat' being perturbed by the actor's arrogant views, drives him out in a fit of rage. This results in a misunderstanding between him and his son-in-law and daughter. Finally, his daughter turns 'Natasamrat' out of her home. From this point the tragic element in the play begins to develop. The struggle begins between the inner and outer world in the life of 'Natasamrat' which ultimately ends in tragedy.

The struggle between man and his destiny is the theme common to all of Shirwadkar's literature. The second important feature in his literature is his moral and idealistic vision. Of course, he does not directly preach either morality or idealism through his literature. Natasamrat's idealistic and moral vision is one of the chief causes of his suffering.

Still another feature of Shirwadkar's art is the mystery–philosophical relaltionship he assumes between the earth and the

sky. Earth is an image of the material and sky is an image of the dynamic life of man. Natasamrat's relationship with his son, daughter-in-law, daughter and son-in-law is thus, strictly earth bound, whereas through his idealism he tries to reach the heights of the sky. In fact that is the creative, dynamic force in his life.

The rich complexity of *Natasamrat* as a dramatic work can be fathomed to a certain extent only when one takes into account these aspects of the play.

P.L. Gadgil

1975 Award

R.B. Patankar

Soundarya Mimansa

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1974; 22+552 pp.; Rs. 35.00

"Dr. R.B. Patankar, distinguished Marathi aesthetician and critic, was born in 1927. He holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English and has been teaching at the college and university levels since 1951. He has also taught aesthetics since 1966. He has published three books so far and his commentary on Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* is to be published soon. He is on various committees of the Government of Maharashtra concerned with language and translation and is the vice-president of the Aesthetics Society, Bombay.

Saundarya Mimansa is considered an outstanding contribution to Marathi literature for its original concepts in aesthetics, and its ability to put the right problems, clarity, and force of ideas."

R.B. Patankar's *Saundarya Mimansa* is a monumental work, wide-ranging in its intellectual scope and yet neatly focussed

and rigorous in its argumentation. The greatness of this book lies, not only in its crystallisation of so much that is valuable and yet implicit in modern aesthetic thinking, but also in its tremendous potential for creating intellectual traditions in more than one field.

It has broadened the aesthetic foundation of literary criticism in Marathi language which had so far relied too heavily and too long on B.S. Mardhekar's narrow version of formalism. Patankar has also been able to energize a rather weak tradition of philosophical analysis in Marathi, particularly in his analysis of ethical theories such as Institutionism (G.E. Moore) and Emotivism.

Saundarya Mimansa has a good deal to contribute to comparative aesthetics. His discussion of the western aesthetic thought from Plato and Aristotle to Wittgenstein and Sartre, and of the Indian tradition from the Sanskrit texts to modern Marathi critics such as Mardhekar, is highly analytical. There is also a highly insightful discussion of the ontology of an aesthetic object where he brings together Kant's principle of 'disinterestedness' and Shankuka's 'chitraturga-nyaya' (the principle of 'horse in a painting'). He recognizes that concepts in aesthetics, as in any other humanistic discipline, are flexible, open-ended, 'essentially contested' in nature, and therefore, in his mapping, characterizes them more in terms of 'family resemblance' that in terms of essences.

Patankar's conceptual mapping is guided by a deep meta-aesthetic principle which he formulates as the 'bi-polarity' principle, i.e. art theories are either autonomist or non-autonomist. Patankar's sustained effort to reconstruct theories at both the poles and then to argue convincingly that literary aesthetics cannot be autonomist, does not allow the bi-polarity principle to appear either simplistic or reductionisitic. Patankar does not indeed claim originality for having discovered the principle, but it goes to his credit, to have formulated it as a meta-aesthetic principle in a manner more explicit than has so far been done, and further to have examined the two 'poles' as they are rooted in the concrete activities of art-creation and art-appreciation.

Milind S. Malshe

1976 Award

G.N. Dandekar

Smarangatha

Majestic Book Stall, Bombay; 1973; 558 pp.; Rs. 30.00

"Sri G.N. Dandekar, distinguished Marathi novelist, short story writer and poet was born in 1916 at Paratwada in Mahara -shtra. When he was 13 and in the fifth standard he left his home to join the Indian freedom movement. From 1933, he travelled throughout the country with Gadge Baba, the sage from Maharashtra, for 4 years. He also studied *Dnyaneshwari* and was initiated into Vedanta by the eminent Vedantin Sridhar Shastri Pathak. He has nearly a hundred publications to his credit, many of them novels, collections of short stories and poems, some of which have won several literary prizes.

Smarangatha is considered an outstanding contribution to Marathi literature for its intimate narration, effortless but restrained style, moving characterisation and masterly use of the various dialects of the language."

Smarangatha (Remembrance of Things Past) presents a pulsating account of the author's life from childhood up to the age of thirty. The little boy who leaves home to join the national movement for freedom at the call of Gandhiji, embraces the life of an exile. What begins as a struggle for mere survival gradually acquires the dimensions of a pilgrimage, which is as much physical as it is spiritual. The amazing trials and tribulations of this life are recorded by Dandekar with a unique sensibility for the scene and the event. His language is distinctly his own, its native hue is never sicklied over with the pale cast of thought. It is soaked in feeling and is rich with the natural colours and tones of the experience it seeks to embody. Everything–noble or ignoble, laudable or censurable–is rendered with rare honesty and candour and occasionaly with a touch of wry humour.

A most lovable aspect of this autobiography is that the author is never so absorbed in himself as in the people around him. The narration of his personal experiences is only a means of discovering men and nature with genuine human warmth. *Smarangatha* gives us memorable portraits of several men and women, notably those of Sadguru Swayamprakash Atma (his eccentric uncle), Gadge Maharaj (the popular saint from Vidarbha) and Shridhar Shastri Pathak (the Vedantist).

Dandekar's love of nature is also equally profound. He has an intimate knowledge of the trees and flowers, rivers and mountains, and insects and wild animals, and his powers of observation are truly fascinating.

Dandekar's life was an ordeal by any standards. He is neither embittered by grief nor filled with cynical contempt for life by its ugliness. The ruling principle of the narrative is not self-pity, but compassion for man, bird and beast and love of life. Underneath the turmoil of existence, one can feel the author's quiet search for self-liberation, his inner discipline (*sadhana*) and his reverence for life. The book appropriately ends with an expression of his humble gratitude to life.

V.R. Kanadey

1978 Award

Arati Prabhu (C.T. Khanolkar)

Nakshtranche Dene

Mouj Prakashan, Bombay; 1975; viii+93 pp.; Rs. 10.00.

"The late Sri Arati Prabhu, distinguished Marathi poet, was perhaps more popularly known by his real name C.T. Khanolkar,which he used in his novels and plays. He was born at Bagalachi Rai, Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra in 1930. He abandoned his studies without getting a degree and after brief spells of service decided to devote himself entirely to writing. Before his untimely demise in 1976, he had published three collections of poems, ten novels, eight plays, a number

of short stories and one-act plays, and two books for children. His plays have been successfully staged and one of his novels, *Kondura*, was made into a film by the noted film-maker Shyam Benegal. His books have won a number of awards and he was also a recipient of the Homi Bhabha Fellowship. In 1977, he was given the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award posthumously for the best playwright of the year.

Nakshtranche Dene is considered an outstanding contribution to Marathi literature for its probing into the mystery of human existence, the restless spirit behind its poems, and their variety of mood, tone and imagery."

Nakshtranche Dene is the third significant poetic collection of Arati Prabhu *alias* C.T. Khanolkar. Dealing basically with love, nature and human emotions, the predominant attitude that pervades through his poetry is that of poignancy and affliction. Arati loves life and people, and was more often allured by the beauty of nature; still the major chunk of his poetry is full of profound gloom, dejection and melancholic moods. He expresses them many times through dramatic monologues. They are the outcome of the failure in love, piercing thorn of suspicion in the deep-rooted faith in God, triviality of the people around, bluntness of the literary world and the awareness of the perennial process of decaying. He does not ponder over the tragic condition of human life but his keen observations of human life and intuitive grasp of the human predicament perturb his soul. The insipid human relations based on self-centredness torture him and he scorns and scoffs at them. He encounters this experience through satire and irony. Moods of depression caused by the experience of futility or meaninglessness of life possesses him sometimes and hence the feelings of loneliness.

The sweet reminiscences of union and agonizing experiences of separation are delicately portrayed. Sometimes the experience depicted on the level of fantasy combines both the sweetness and pensiveness of union and separation.

Arati's love for nature is great. Enamoured and enticed by the beauty of nature, Arati renders picturesque scenes of nature drenched in emotion and uses profusely the images of nature.

Arati's ability to create images mostly out of nature and human behaviour is stupendous. Enriching the texture of the poetry these images communicate passion and animated sensibility very effec-

tively. The evocative power of those effusive imagery is such that the sensitive reader is immediately captivated even before he gets the full apprehension of poetry. Arati's *poetry is not esoteric but* is difficult to penetrate due to its intricate structure which is not a result of conscious workmanship but of his natural ability to use images and surprising phrases.

The music engendered by the exquisite association of words increases the lyrical quality of Arati's poetry. The subtle and delicate use of traditional techniques like alliteration and rhyme enhances its magical efficacy. Arati's poetry is stamped with his individuality and it is impossible to emulate it and far more difficult to excel.

Chandrakant Bandivadekar

NEPALI

1977 Award

Indra Bahadur Rai

Nepali Upanyaska Adharharu

Nepali Sahitya Parishad, Darjeeling; 1974; 293 pp.; Rs. 12.00

"Sri Indra Bahadur Rai, distinguished Nepali author and critic, was born in 1930 at Balasan, Darjeeling. He obtained his M.A. in English from the North Bengal University and teaches at St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling. A prominent citizen of the town, he was elected chairman of Darjeeling Municipality for 1966-70. A perceptive interpreter of Nepali literature, he is one of the founders of the Aayamik Lekhan movement in modern Nepali. Sri Rai has six original works and two edited volumes to his credit. He has also been the President of the Nepali Sahitya Parishad, a premier literary organisation of the Indian Nepalis.

Nepali Upanyaska Adharharu is considered an outstanding contribution to Nepali literature for its rare critical insights and a contemporary point of view, its original and pioneering approach and constructive evaluation."

Nepali Upanyaska Adharharu is an analytical research criticism of twelve leading Nepali novels as well the seventy-seven years of historical development of the Nepali novel. To Rai the plot and the characters are not the only basis or 'Adhar' of a novel; the only basis is thought. In view of that, in his criticism, one can easily perceive the seventy-seven years of development of the Nepali novel which has grasped all the Eastern and Western thoughts–right from Puranic Ideals to Progressivism, Marxism and Existentialism.

Using classical and pragmatic criticism, Rai analyses and interprets the inner depth and beauty of the novels. In this criticism a reader gets a well lighted vision of the novelists and their thoughts.

One can easily understand the depth of the novel and the deep study of the author, as well as his arena of thinking. The main attraction of this book is its language, a language of depth which equally matches the thought of the writer.

Rai, always an experimentalist in his writing, has not deviated here as usual. True to his views as 'Ayamik', he has used the language of paintings and has given new words, matching his thoughts. Of course, being an intellectual, he cannot be easily understood without proper concentration on these lines as his sentences compel one to think and ponder, it is something like *Kantian*–although the style is typically his own.

Lakhi Devi Sundas

1978 Award

Shiva Kumar Rai

Khaharey

Sagar Prakashan, Darjeeling; 1976; 8+89 pp.; Rs. 3.75

"Sri Shiva Kumar Rai, distinguished writer of short stories, novelist and poet in Nepali, was born at Rhenock, Sikkim in 1919. Obtaining his Bachelor's degree in Arts from St.Xavier's College, Calcutta in 1941 he became a school-teacher. He was soon drawn into the Indian struggle for freedom and founded, with others, the All India Gurkha League. He was elected to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1948 and joined the State Cabinet under Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy as Deputy Minister for Labour in 1952. He gave up politics to join the All India Radio as Producer, Nepali Programmes at Kurseong. Sri Rai has been writing for the last thirty years and he has published three collections of short stories, a novel and a long poem. Some of his short stories have been translated into English, Bengali and Hindi. Sri Rai, who is a Member of the Sahitya Akademi Advisory Board for Nepali, was awarded the Ratna Shree Prize by the Ratna Shree Foundation of Nepal for his services to literature.

> *Khaharey* is considered an outstanding contribution to Nepali literature for its deep insight into human life, variety of experience, natural and informal style and lucidity of language."

Shiva Kumar Rai occupies an important place in modern Indian Nepali literature. Indeed, he is one of the makers of Indian Nepali literature.

Khaharey, the third collection of his short stories, reveals him to be an accomplished teller of stories. Rai does not confine himself to any particular breed of topics, and freely and competently allows himself to be romantic as well as mystical and realistic. An instantaneous rapport is established between the author and the reader mainly by virtue of the enormous fund of affection that Rai has for all the characters in his stories. The portrayal has been done not detachedly but with the writer's sense of involvement in social life, at the level of social and human togetherness. Rai is an unrivalled master of chaste Nepali language and this is witnessed in no lessened measure in the short stories *of Khaharey*.

I.B. Rai

ORIYA

1955 Award

Gopinath Mohanty

Amrutara Santan

Bharthi Bihar, Calcutta; 1949; 831 pp; Rs. 10.0.0.

Amrutara Santan is an epic which celebrates in fictional form the anguish and ecstasy, the joys and tragedies of the tribal world. The tribe in question is the Kondh tribe, the largest among the Orissan tribes, and one of the most primitive, tucked away in the inaccessible hills and jungles of the Eastern Ghats.

To say, this is in no way to suggest that it is an ethnographic novel. No doubt a vast wealth of cultural materials such as rituals, celebrations, death rites, the rite of naming a child, exorcising witches, etc. are there but they are only part of the grand design of the novel and are beautifully transmitted from dry data of ethnography to pulsating poetry through the integrative vision and superb craftsmanship of the author.

The principle characters of the novel are Diudu, the young *saonta* or village head man and Piyu, Diudu's wife. There are Pubuli, Diudu's younger sister and Diudu's uncle Lenju. The novel is about the lives of these people, their problems, their joys and their sorrows. It deals with marital relationships portrayed through Diudu and Piyu. Diudu is unfaithful, and slowly drifting away from her after her child birth, sickness and declining health, takes to another women, Pioti and finally brings her home. This forces Piyu to leave her husband. The characters in the novel are painted with a stark and living realism. This is true not only of the major ones but also of the minor characters.

The canvas of the novel is vast but it is an intimate world of a few villages interlinked through marital alliances; the focus, however, being on a few characters portrayed with vivid concreteness and complexity. The novelist paints pictures in words. The changing seasons of the tribal physical landscape, the rains, the spring, the autumn

and winter, the sunrise and sunset, the various occasions of ritual and religious festivities, are all portrayed so beautifully that one almost gets into both the physical, social and psychic world of Orissa and India's tribal world. It is indeed a remarkable work of fiction, certainly one of the finest Indian novels of all times.

Sitakant Mahapatra

1958 Award

Kanhucharan Mohanty

Ka

Sathi Prakashan, Cuttack; 1956; 280 pp.

> "Sri Kanhucharan Mohanty was born in 1906, at Sonepur in Bolangir district. He is a distinguished novelist and author of 26 books in Oriya."

Ka is based on the theme that the ultimate goal of a woman's life is motherhood. Nandika, the beautiful and beloved wife of Sunanda, a young business enterpreneur, is childless even after seven years of marriage. The mother-in-law Abhaya, in her bid to save the family lineage influences Sunanda for a second marriage. However, the irony of fate is such that Nandika herself becomes the mother of a son after her husband's second marriage. The story spins round Nandika and depicts many facets of her character as a loving spouse, a dutiful housewife, an obedient daughter-in-law, a tolerant co-wife, and above all as a woman languishing for a child.

Ka has a simple structure which develops linearly with just four blind bends–Nandika declared barren, Sunanda's second marriage with Lalita, Lalita compromising herself to be Nandika's dummy, and finally Nandika becoming a mother. Other minor characters also provoke Sunanda's desire for money, sex and parental love and provide contrastive backdrops to the actions and feelings of the main story and its four characters–Sunanda, Nandika, Lalita and Abhaya.

The novel is full of pathos and emotional appeal. The long awaited moment of happiness comes at the end, when Nandika delivers the child at her life's risk and the mother-in-law gets the news on her death bed. Kanhucharan's greatest achievement is that he secures sympathy of the readers for all his characters.

Khageswar Mahapatra

1961 Award

Godavaris Misra

Ardhasatabdir Odisa O Tanhire Mo Sthan

Grantha Mandir, Cuttack; 1958; 310 pp.; Rs. 4.75

> "Sri Pandit Godavaris Misra (1888-1956) was one of the pioneers of modern Oriya literature. Published posthumously in 1958, this autobiography is much more than a mere narrative of the author's personal life. It is no less an authentic account of the history and development of Orissa for half a century during which the author worked as a teacher, legislator, social reformer and patriot."

Ardhasatabdir Odisa O Tanhire Mo Sthan (Half-Century Orissa and My Place There), though an autobiography, does not give a complete account of Pandit Misra's life. But due to his sudden death in 1956, the work remained unfinished, and out of a projected forty-five chapters of the first part, he had completed only thirty-four chapters, and covered the period till about 1923.

The book has two aspects. One relates to the first three decades of the twentieth century, and the changing socio-political situations. The second aspect refers to the writer's role in that background. In addition, there are accounts of the writer's own growth beginning with his early years at Banpur through educational years at Puri, Cuttack and Calcutta to his teachership in the famous Satyabadi National School at Sakhigopal, near Puri, which he left in 1919 to move over to Singbhum district for teaching and Congress work. Finally he returned to Banpur in 1922 to rest and prepare for the future. Thus the book is both an autobiographical account of Pandit Misra, though incomplete, as well as a graphic account of times,

persons and personalities. The narrative is not strictly chronological. The past has been seen as a totality from a point of time in future, which is 1951 and subsequent years till 1956 in this case. Thus there are continuous movements between the past and the present as well as moods and emotions, and the structure is both narrative and discursive with a fair sprinkling of contemplative observation. In addition, there are subtle shreds of humour as well as irony, and a keen desire to see things not only as they are but detached from the sentimental implications as related, to one's own individual self. These together with the fine use of colloquial language have made it both entertaining and serious and at the same time highly satisfying.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

1963 Award

Sachi Raut Roy

Kabita–1962

Grantha Mandir, Cuttack; 1962; 304 pp.; Rs. 12.00

> "Sachi Raut Roy (b. 1916) is one of the leading poets in Oriya, who has made significant contribution to the development of creative literature in his language. In aspiration as well as in technique his poetry voices the passion of a rebel. He has published many volumes of verse and was awarded Padmashree by the Government of India in 1962.
>
> The Award book *Kabita–1962* is the latest collection of his poems embodying his experiments with the new style and technique of expressing the contemporary reality. The work also includes an extensive introduction to the movement of new poetry in Oriya and other languages."

Kabita–1962 contains fifty-five poems, besides a long post-script in prose on the background and nature of 'new poetry'. It is an important book as it contains some of the best poems of Raut Roy, particularly related to his own new-romantic themes about nature and social

concern. The romantic-revolutionary Raut Roy of the earlier volumes was replaced by a Raut Roy who then became painfully aware of the impact of the contemporary life on the individual and expressed this awareness with honesty, and through the use of carefully chosen images which acted as a sort of objective correlative of that awareness.

In *Kabita–1962*, modern theme has been consolidated with a matching structure of images and rhythms. A good instance is the poem "Swagat Eka" :

But all these obstacles and impediments
this hill of inevitable sadness,
are playthings for that desire,
Hence are my thighs broken
and my rifle falls, and my hands
are too weak to pick up the Gandiba bow.
Oh, the white wounds of my battle!
Give me peace, give me sleep,
and draw up the tent of your love.

The desiccation, fragmentation and sense of impotence that characterise the consciousness of the individual self under the pressures and strains of modern living have also found powerful expression in his poems such as "Bhagna Nayak" (The Defeated Hero), "Nianre Chaliba" (To Walk on Fire), "Drust" (The Vision), "Antarala" (The Inner View), "Sri Gundicha" (Car Festival Day), "Antariksha" (The Firmament), "Simanta Train" (The Border-Train) and "Uttarasuri" (Successors). The use of the consciousness of death in *Kabita–1962*, is something new in Raut Roy's own poetic career. For example, the poem "Ghara" (Hope) :

But one day that complex hand
will pounce upon us, and this hard door
will break, the lights will be switched off.
That hand will embezzle my sure universe
and will disappear in a moment;
It is that Death–some call it Eternity–
Alas ! Alas ! that Black, Dreadful Cat !

Yet the strident rhetoric that [illegible] ocial p[illegible]
is absent in poems of a similar kind [illegible] its p[illegible]

we find a quiet and amused tone of irony that captures the paradoxes inherent in the life around us.

Finally it must be said that most of the poems of *Kabita–1962* are impressive achievements which consolidate his reputation as the pioneer modern poet in post-Independence Oriya poetry, and it is no exaggeration to say that the colourful and varied Oriya poetry of the 1960s and 70s gathered no mean strength from *Kabita–1962*.

Prafulla K. Jagadeb

1964 Award

Nilakantha Das

Atmajibani

Cuttack Students Store, Cuttack; 1963; 301 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Pt. Nilakantha Das (b. 1984) is a distinguished Oriya author, patriot and social worker. After obtaining his Master's degree from the University of Calcutta, Sri Das started the open-air Satyabadi High School in 1911. Later on, he joined the national movement for freedom and served prison sentences in 1922, 1930 and 1933. He was afterwards elected to the Central Legislative Assembly and was its member up to 1945. In 1947 he was elected as the Speaker of the Orissa State Assembly. He has been intimately associated with several cultural associations besides being the Pro-Chancellor of the Utkal University and Head of the Utkal Sahitya Akademi. In his long and chequered career, Sri Nilakantha Das has written a number of books on a wide variety of subjects including books for children.

The Award book, *Atmajibani*, is the autobiography of this grand old man of Oriya literature and vividly describes the cultural and political events in Orissa for more than half a century. For its authentic record of the times, its charming style and lucidity of expression, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

The autobiography of Pandit Nilakantha Das is a faithful expression of multifaceted reactions of a mind sensitive to the situations which form the nexus of one's contemporary world. Das makes an authentic record of the conflict between his self within, and facts without. This conflict, while crystallizing Das's attitude towards himself, focuses attention on his art and society. He maintains an objective distance between committed fidelity to self, feelings and passions and his involvement with the social milieu in which he deeply lived.

Though not in a strict chronological order *Atmajibani* gives an authentic picture of contemporary Orissa–social, political and cultural. The analysis of events and short portrayals of different characters show Nilakantha's revolutionary attitude and dispassionate judgement. Even in emotional situations, he restrains himself from personalized sentiments and emotions. His character-sketches, though brief, are life-like and poignant. The pictures of Ram Chandra Ratha and B.V. Gupta are drawn with warmth and sympathy.

The most striking aspect of his work is its use of language. Though a Sanskrit scholar of repute, he never burdens his language with Sanskritization. Typical Oriya words and use of verbs and nouns in their proper context, give his language a taste of soil and culture. With a remarkable economy of words, he expresses delicate nuances of feelings. However, Nilakantha lacks a sense of humour. He has not consistently attained that loving closeness which all readers expect from an autobiography, though the work is undoubtedly a landmark in Oriya literature for its objectivity in treatment and its subtle use of the Oriya language.

Saurindra Nath Barik

1965 Award

Baikunthanath Patnaik

Uttarayana

Das Brothers, Cuttack; 1964; 295 pp.; Rs.6.00

"Sri Baikunthanath Patnaik (b. 1904) is a distinguished Oriya poet. Born at Baramba in the district of Cuttack, Sri Baikun-

thanath Patnaik received his education at the University of Patna and later joined the State Educational Service from where he retired as Inspector of Schools in 1959. Sri Patnaik entered the literary field during the twenties and was one of the pioneers of the modern movement known as the Sabuj group which brought to Oriya poetry a high idealism, romantic faith and a spirit of experimentation under the influence of Rabindranath Tagore. Sri Patnaik's first collection of poems published under the title *Kavya Sanchayana* established his reputation as a major Oriya poet. His poetry is marked by a deep-seated humanism and an anguish of the soul struggling to reach its goal. He has also published a drama entitled *Mukti Pathe*, and has been actively associated with the Utkal Sahitya Samaj.

The Award book, *Uttarayana*, is an impressive collection of poems of this veteran poet written over a long period and bears eloquent testimony to the author's sensibility and idealism. For its depth of feeling and the musical quality of its verse, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

Uttarayana (North Movement), a collection of the poet's later poems reveals not only the poet's mature thoughts and a detached mind but also his effortless rhymes and metrics. The themes of *Uttarayana* generally cover a wide span, though apparently from the picture on the cover, one may think that they deal with love and alienation. But in the preface, the poet recalls the memories of his friends of the 'Sabuja' group and recollects the transformation made in the minds of the 'greens', the young spirits. In a touching song, the poet tells how every morning the bright sun, the humming bees and countless blooming flowers steal the despair out of his life. The poet sings not for his own, but for all.

The collection contains 110 poems which are grouped in different sections, such as 'To the Friends', 'Salutes to the Sainta', 'Dream of the Green', 'Of Moments', 'Of Spring', etc. Some of his well known poems written earlier are also included in the book. One such poem is "Mruttika Darsan", written on the death of his child.

In sensual perception and emotive language *Uttarayana* is considered a significant collection in modern Oriya poetry. The poet, born in our age of turmoil, tries to live beyond the frontiers of sorrow

and despair in quiet grace and tranquillity and therein probably lies the greatest significance of *Uttarayana*.

Narendranath Mishra

1966 Award

Godavarish Mahapatra

Banka O Sidha

Das Bothers, Cuttack; 1964; 256 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"The late Godavarish Mahapatra (1898-1965) was a distinguished Oriya poet and author. Born in a rural family of deep religious and poetic sensibilities in the district of Puri, Sri Godavarish began composing verses even as a child and wrote his famous poem on *Banapura* while at school. The poem which evoked the charm and style of the late Radhanath Rai, pioneer of modern Oriya poetry, attracted the attention of Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das, the great Oriya leader, under whose influence Sri Godavarish dedicated his life to the service of his people and his country. He joined the famous Satyabadi school and was drawn into the current of the national patriotic movement sweeping Orissa at the time. He took to journalism and used his powerful pen to voice the sentiments and urges of his people. He never ceased to be creative and enriched almost all genres of literature by his virility and vigour. His works which number more than fifty include novels, short stories, poems, essays, criticism, biographies, besides satires and writings for children in which he excelled. His writings have a remarkable blending of lucidity, humour and patriotism and bear testimony to his restless spirit.

The Award book, *Banka O Sidha*, is the last collection of his poems on various topics. For their innate humanity and their exquisite form the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

> it runs into three large volumes, the third and the last volume having been published in 1966. For its broad vision and wide sweep, its objective appraisal of various trends and its lucid prose style it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

Odiya Sahityara Itihas, in four volumes, is the first comprehensive history of Oriya literature, a serious work and it testifies the quality of a mind which is at once meticulous and explorative.

The beginnings of Oriya literature are traced to the fourteenth century, and for the last 600 years it has grown through mutually complementary as well as independent directions. Oriya literature reflected the social life grew through the periods of unrest and uncertainty. They are relatively the major figures prior to modern times, such as Sarala Balaram Dinakrushna, Upendra, Kabisurya, Gopalkrushna, Bhima Bhoi, etc. in a way, in their different styles, mirrored the changes. Das's book, which chronologically comes up to modern times, is both involved in its response and competency in its delineation of complex aspects of Oriya literature.

Odiya Sahityara Itihas is a thorough going book. Its greatest strength lies in its details on the one hand and on the other, the system and clarity with which these details have been organised. There are references to socio-political-religious background as well as the extent to which these factors have influenced various literary productions. At the same time, there are discussions about changes in language style as well as comparative estimates among authors. There are also biographical accounts and references to controversies wherever they exist, along with references to whatever the authors have to say about themselves in their books. Finally, there are accounts, chronologically as far as possible, and in all details, of the various works along with profuse illustrations from the text and with necessary analysis and commentary as guide lines to the readers. All these add to project an almost complete account of the author under discussion based on almost up-to-date and non-controversial findings and research. Two good examples are the critical accounts given of Dinakrushna Das and Upendra Bhanja–the two most important Oriya poets of early eighteenth century, and the latter particularly was a major poet who initiated completely new trends which were followed by hundreds of subsequent poets. Dinakrushna has been given about 150 pages, and Upendra about

600 pages. Even minor and comparatively less important writers have been discussed in the same format and with respect and difference.

Das's book is a comprehensive work, and also a pioneering one. Das was not strictly an academic scholar. But his book has acted as a model for academics engaged in charting the history of Oriya Literature.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

1969 Award

Surendra Mohanty

Nila Saila

Cuttack Students Stores, Cuttack; 1968; 514 pp; Rs 15.00

"Sri Surendra Mohanty (b. 1922) is a distinguished novelist, scholar and author. Born in village Purusottampur in Cuttack district, Sri Mohanty's academic education was cut short by his expulsion from the Ravenshaw College for active participation in the Quit India Movement. Sri Mohanty took to journalism and edited *Janata*, a weekly, from 1946 to 1952, and *Ganatantra*, a daily, from 1956 to 1962, and is at present editor of *Kalinga*, a daily.

Sri Mohanty's first literary venture was a play, *Punthivir Aloka,* which won for him an award from the Mayurbhanj Janmachab Samiti in 1945. But he soon found that the medium of short story and novel was more to his liking and temperament. His very first short stories were hailed as a new landmark in Oriya literature, and in 1959 the Orissa Sahitya Akademi Award was conferred on him for his collection of short stories, *Sabuja Patra O Dhusar Golap. Andha Diganta,* his first novel, too, was awarded the Orissa Sahitya Akademi Award in 1966. Novelist and short story writer, playwright and biographer, historian of literature and a journalist of distinction, Sri Mohanty has received several honours, and was a Member of Parliament from 1952 to 1962.

> The Award book, *Nila Saila*, is a historical novel dealing with the story of the famous temple of Jagannath at Puri. For its catholicity of approach and for its vast galaxy of characters the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

Mohanty is an important modern Oriya novelist and *Nila Saila* an important novel, is a significant contribution to the tradition of historical novels in Orissa which had began with Fakirmohan Senapati in the later part of the nineteenth century. Thus it may be said that the novel is both a fine documentation of the lines it portrays as well on an account of human factor that may be in clash with each other at any point of time irrespective of the past, present and future.

The novel *Nila Saila* attempts to tell a story of heroism in the history of Orissa in the eighteenth century when it was under the oppressive rule of the later Mughals, and the main concern of the rulers was to extort as much as they could from the 'infidels' to replenish their coffers in Murshidabad and Delhi. The central figure is Raja Ramachandra Deb of Khurdah, who was obliged under duress to embrace Islam and marry the sister of the Naib-nazim Taki Khan, but strove at great personal sacrifice to save the deity that is, Lord Jagannath of Puri, from the clutches of the bigoted rulers. For, was he not after all the servant of the Lord in the racial tradition? And how could anything happen to the deity, who was the soul-image of the Oriya people? Thus the heroism of the supposedly renegade Raja gave expression to an upsurge, patriotic more than religious, to protect the Lord and the national honour. It is in this unique perception of the Oriya ethos which *persists till today that the novel can be considered an outstanding* contribution to Indian literature. In this book, one does not have to look for subtleties in human thought and conduct, and even nature does not exist except in pathetic fallacies. We are fascinated by the way the Lord comes alive in numerous rituals including Rathajatra (car festival) described in authentic detail, and in the outpourings of intense love, even anger of his people. That the narrative does not end in triumph is a tragedy. The fate of the deity spirited away in an island in the midst of Chilika lake remains uncertain. The Raja looks upon the lake as a "blue desert" and asks himself repeatedly where do I go from here? The

author seems to suggest that there is no end to man's search for a spiritual centre, and we cannot agree more.

Kishori Charan Das

1970 Award

Binod Chandra Nayak

Sarisrupa

Lark Books, Cuttack; 1969; 100 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Sri Binod Chandra Nayak (b. 1917) is a distinguished poet and litterateur in Oriya. Born at Telipali in the district of Sundergarh, Sri Nayak received his degree of M.A. in English literature from Patna University in 1943. Later on he obtained the degree of M.A. in Oriya from the Utkal University in 1951. After finishing his studies he joined the educational service of the Orissa State where he has successfully worked on a number of posts. At present he is working as the Secretary of the Sahitya, the Sangeet Natak and the Lalit Kala Akademies of his State.

Sri Nayak took to writing poetry while still a student and his first collection of poems *Haimantee* was published in 1933 when he was only 16. The freshness of outlook and the richness of imagination promised by these poems were duly fulfilled by the collection of poems that followed at almost regular intervals. Sri Nayak has now six published collections of poems to his credit besides a long poem and a lyrical drama.

The Award book, *Sarisrupa*, is his fourth collection of poems first published in 1969. For its wide poetic range and sensitive portrayal of human emotions, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

Sarisrupa (The Reptile) by Binod Chandra Nayak which was published in 1970, was the fifth published volume of Nayak, the first being *Nila Chandrara Upatyaka* (The Valley of Blue Moon) which was published in 1951 and made an immediate impact on poetry lovers

in Orissa. Nayak has other volumes subsequent to *Sarisrupa*, and today he is reckoned with respect among the senior poets of Orissa. In fact in the fifties Nayak's poetry provided a link between the earlier romantic and 'green' poetry of the thirties and forties and the New Poetry that was emerging in the Oriya literature in the fifties. In this respect Nayak's poetic achievement is comparable to that of Sachi Raut Ray (born 1916) who provided this link more eloquently and successfully.

Sarisrupa contains sixty-five poems, with the title-poem coming at the end. The poems are on a variety of topics such as, "Anupam Silong" (Uniquely Beautiful Shillong), "Eka Nirjana Mail Khunta" (A Lonely Mile Marker), "Sapa Dekha" (To See a Snake), "Nagapheni" (Cactus), "Bhadaghar" (The Rented House), "Phalguna Pare" (After the Spring), "Bharatiya Bimanbahini" (Indian Air Force), etc. The have also more than one trend. Thus there is a longing for the distance, both in time and space, as well as an involvement with here and now. Secondly, tender romantic emotions are as much evident as a concern for reality and naked factors of life. Then there is quick response to nature and nature's 'beauty' along with a contemplative mood meditating on man's destiny and inevitable decay of life, as well as on whatever else is permanent and eternal in the process of living. Most of the poems are short compositions, combination of many moods, in an atmosphere of music and sensuousness. A good example is the title poem. There are two references. The first relates to a chance encounter with a youthful woman and the consequent sexual union, almost animal like, on a river bank, in a coffee plantation. The second is a contemplation of the action: "The clouds float over the distant barley field/And I ask/ Where does it end?/ What happens to the foetus that takes shape now? Will a superman appear?" But the poem does not come to any conclusion. The naked youthful body does not provoke passion any more. It brings recognition and respect–"That naked, youthful body/I bow to it/That is bright, that is eternal/As clean as the white moon in the sky."

The new Oriya poetry in the fifties and in the subsequent decades brought in complex attitudes and complex layers of feelings. Nayak's poetry has a fine clarity as well as a sensitive old-world charm. It satisfies in the way all good poems satisfy.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

1971 Award

Manoranjan Das

Aranya Fasal

Lark Books, Cuttack; 1970; 125 pp.; Rs. 5.50

> "Sri Manoranjan Das (b. 1921) is a distinguished author and playwright in Oriya. Born in a village of the Cuttack district, he graduated in Arts and Law from Ravenshaw College. After practising at the Bar for a few years, he joined the All India Radio, Cuttack, where he is now working as a drama producer.
>
> Sri Manoranjan Das began writing plays at an early age. He came to limelight with his play *Jauban* in 1945. Since then he has written profusely for the theatre and the film. He has made a significant contribution to experimental stage in Orissa, and has also won the Orissa State Sahitya Akademi award for his collection of short plays.
>
> The Award book, *Aranya Fasal* is his latest full-length play first published in 1970. It is in the nature of an absurd play commenting on the incongruities of modern life. For its psychological insight and bold experimentation the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

Aranya Fasal has five main characters, two couples–a teacher of Philosophy and his wife, a businessman and his wife–and a young man, supposed to be an 'adventurer', prospecting for 'gold'. The location is a remote dak-bungalow, in the midst of a forest, where the two couples have gone for a weekend picnic as well as, at least for the businessman, in search of 'big games'. They are joined by the young man accidentally. The additional character is the caretaker of the dak-bungalow who has a pet goat. The main characters are city-bred and are socially known to each other. Therefore, large portions of their conversation tend to become the usual social talk, related to their habits, manners, desires, etc. Then there are arrangements for the picnic, as well as preparations for the hunt of 'big games' at night. Then again there is love-talk and reminiscences, particularly between two characters who have known each other

from their college days. These different strands have built up the necessary frame as also gone to provide a generally complex patterning to the themes. Thus, at one level the characters try to establish their identities under conflict with one another. At another level they try to communicate and understand each other. At still another level the desires tend to become actions where some try to hunt for 'big game' and others go in search of 'gold'. All these fail–no identity was established, no communication was achieved and the actions end in dismal failures. Men's actions are symbolically projected by the goat, who continues to bleat and finally gets killed to become man's meat. Even when characters talk, it is all reduced to half utterances and monosyllables.

Manoranjan is the most important dramatist today in Orissa. During his long career, beginning from the mid-forties, he has again and again responded to the change in taste and sensibility, and to that extent not only has created new drama again and again, but has continuously provided leadership to the growth of modern drama in Orissa. *Aranya Fasal* was not only a new play in Manoranjan's total oeuvre, but it initiated a whole series of new plays by other dramatists, and has, since 1970, remained as one of the most important modern plays in Orissa.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

1972 Award

Manoj Das

Manojdasank Katha O Kahini

Friends Publishers, Cuttack; 1969; 400 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Manoj Das (b. 1934) was born at Sankhari, a village on the sea-coast of Orissa. Sri Manoj Das received his higher education at Utkal University and became a lecturer in English literature at Cuttack. In 1963 he joined Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry as a teacher.

Starting his literary career in his student days, Sri Manoj Das has a number of published works to his credit in Oriya

and English which include poems and travelogues besides short stories which is his forte. He is also the founder editor of the literary journal, *Diganta,* which played an important role in promoting new writing in Oriya. Many of his short stories have been translated into other Indian and foreign languages. He received the Orissa Sahitya Akademi Award in 1965 and the Prajatantra Vishuv Milan Award in 1970.

The Award book, *Manojdasank Katha O Kahini,* is a representative collection of his short stories, first published in 1971. Based on characters drawn from various walks of life, the work is a variegated album of contemporary society. For its universal appeal and powerful use of language, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

Manojdasank Katha O Kahini is an important collection, containing 57 stories with references to a variety of situations. Thus, some of the stories have titles as varied as "Billi" (Cat), "Kua" (Wall), "Upagraha" (Satellite), "Bagha" (Tiger), "Bannya" (Blood), "Mahamboti" (Candle), "Manusya Market Sambad" (Man-Monkey Tale) and "Bhujakothire Ek Rasi" (A Night in a Haunted House), etc. The stories have in general a genial and humourous structure, but deep inside, they have subtle ironical attitudes, particularly against lies and hypocrisy that have started becoming an 'essential' part of our character in everyday life. Though apparently entertaining, the stories have a sharp point of view, and together they constitute serious contemplations about life.

Some examples may be cited. The first story in the collection entitled "Apahruta Topira Rahasya" (The Mystery of the Stolen Cap) has a humorous situation in the sense that the cap of a minister was taken away by a monkey who thought it to be a play-thing. But the situation, seen through the innocence of a child, develops sinister implications when the outlook of a child is superseded by the understanding of an adult, and the surface veneer of humour is broken to provide an insight into the hypocrisy and deception of man. Similarly, in the second story entitled "Bihanga" (Birds), the last member of an aristocratic family, an expert hunter, suddenly realizes how his love for hunting birds, is a cruel pastime and in his desire to be as free as birds, he tries to achieve his freedom through freeing his caged tiger, at the end of which both he himself

and the tiger lose their lives, as other people failed to understand this sudden desire for freedom and take it as a common incident of a tiger hunting a man. The story has light, entertaining humour but ultimately the attention is focussed on the structure of deception through which man basically lives. In the third story entitled "Pratyabartan" (Return), a famous psychiatrist, after long years of dedicated work in a research institute which he had built up in a distant city, comes to his town for rest and to serve his own people only to find that he has become a misfit because of his capacity to see into truth. He returns to his institute as a broken man with a suspicion that he has probably become ill.

Das's stories have a neat structure. They relax the mind as well as provoke it, and at the same time they suggest ways in which one should assess the ways of life–that is, both with involvement and detachment, both with sympathy and understanding as well as with a capacity to lash out at errors and aberrations, lies and untruth. In fact, *Manojdasank Katha O Kahini* adds a powerful, fresh voice to modern Oriya fiction which has otherwise a rich and complex structure.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

1973 Award

Guru Prasad Mohanty

Samudra Snana

Lark Books, Cuttack; 1970; 74 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Educated at Cuttack, Sri G.P. Mohanty (b. 1924) joined the Orissa Educational Service in 1947 as a Lecturer in English. He has also worked as a Commander of an N.C.C. Battalion for a term of five years. At present he is posted as Deputy-Director of Public Instruction for Higher Education in the Directorate of Education, Orissa.

The Award book, *Samudra Snana*, is the first independent collection of his poems, published in 1970. The poems included in this volume have ushered in a new era in the development of Oriya poetry and represent the first bold response to the complex reality of the times. For its sincere quest of new values and for its deep poetic insight, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Oriya literature."

Samudra Snana (Sea Bathing) is an outstanding contribution to modern Oriya poetry. This collections contains 19 poems of which the first ten deal with love. The mood throughout is ironic. Love in these poems is postulated as a complex of feelings and ideas, and it serves as the occasion for the poet's meditation on process and reality. In "Priya Bandhabi" (Dear Friend) for instance, the speaker invites his beloved to come to him on a moonlit night, but he also notes that the moon is tired and sick and that his own mind is assailed with questions and doubts. The invitation ends with the highly suggestive image of the burial of the two lovers by time which is described as sterile, illogical and irresistible.

The poems like "Harekrushna Das I and II", "Picnic", and "Kalapurusha" (The Great Hunter) have as their theme, the decay of human civilisation in our times. In "Kalapurusha", the longest and probably the most complicated poem in the collection, this sense of human inadequacy is dramatised in terms of situations some of which take the reader's mind to T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*. In "Chhutira Khara" (The Holiday Sun), "Sidhua" and "Keun Ghash Keun Balichara" (Which Grass which Sands) the poet turns his attention from the city to the village. These poems contain some of the finest descriptions in Oriya poetry of the natural beauty of rural Orissa. The sequence of the ten sonnets communicating feelings of love and desolation is an example of the poet's consummate craftsmanship.

One of the chief appeals of Mohanty's poetry lies in its lyricism, its pictorial quality and its verbal melody. Few modern Oriya poets have composed lines of so much evocative charm and beauty as one finds in these poems.

S.K. Mishra

1974 Award

Sitakant Mahapatra

Sabdar Akash

Cuttack Students Stores, Cuttack; 1971; 113 pp.; Rs. 6.00

> "Sri Sitakant Mahapatra, distinguished Oriya poet, was born in 1937, educated at Utkal, Allahabad and Cambridge Universities and is presently an I.A.S. Officer. He has published three anthologies of tribal poetry. He has travelled widely. His poems are translated into English, French, German and Danish.
>
> *Sabdar Akash* is considered an outstanding contribution to Oriya poetry for its mythical framework and powerful language."

Sabdar Akash (The Sky of Words), by Sitakant Mahapatra, contains 35 poems. In these, Mahapatra continues his earlier important trend, of integrating myth or the universality of meaning which a myth provides, with the individual poetic vision. Compared to the poems of the earlier volumes, these have developed a newer and deeper understanding of life's complexity, richness and profundity in a way rarely matched in Oriya poetry to-day. This understanding can be seen from the very first poem of the present book. In the title-poem, "Sabdar Akash", the crude noises of life are heard along with a fine, subtle tune generated by the movement of creative words and the final perception is one of illumination–'wordless', 'echoless', 'shapeless' and 'colourless'.

The title of the book *Sabdar Akash* is indicative of the poet's continuing concern with words, how or to what extent the poet can realize the diverse conditions of mind and can develop an insight into the life of things, through a continuous wrestling with words. These may be external like the innumerable sarees of Draupadi that 'wrapped round her delicate body' almost to 'breathlessness', or they may be, internal, seen as emerging from the innumerable pores in the poet's body into 'light', in innumerable waves. Two favourite images of the poet in this connection are firstly, the sea–how he is drowned in the 'vast, measureless depth' of the sea of words and secondly, the sky–how he is lost in the 'vast, measureless, immensity'

of the sky of words; and the final prayer to that 'Blue God' is that if he is not granted the 'silent, lonely, cruel emptiness' then he be drowned in the 'vast, frightening mass' of the sea. As a poet Sitakant has continued to grow and develop still newer awareness after *Sabdar Akash*. But the book remains a significant work in his total oeuvre. Its emphasis on a sense of loss and decay on the one hand, and on a sense of faith and health on the other, as well as on mutually existing complications, go to provide an important comment on the complex patterns of modern existence.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

1975 Award

Radha Mohan Gadanayak

Surya O Andhakar

Grantha Prakashan, Cuttack; 1974; 62 pp.; Rs. 6.00

> "Sri Radha Mohan Gadanayak, distinguished Oriya poet, was born in the village of Kalandapal in Orissa. He started writing when he was a student but he joined the Indian struggle for freedom in 1929 and could resume his higher education only in 1947. He has been long associated with adult-education and the *Who's Who of Freedom Fighters* in Orissa. He also edited the Oriya monthly *Ekchakra* and was the president of Utkal Sahitya Samaj for three years. Sri Gadanayak is also a member of the General Council and the Oriya Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi.
>
> *Surya O Andhakar* is considered an outstanding contribution to Oriya literature for its solemn and significant adherence to Indian poetic tradition, subtlety of emotions and its rhythmic cadence."

Though *Surya O Andhakar* is a slender collection of only 24 poems, it contains some of the author's representative pieces. The poems like "Chandaka Banara Eka Taruni Baghuni" (A Young Tigress in Chandaka Forest), "Birodhabhasar Gotie Kabita" (A Poem in

Opposites) or "Nila Mastrani" (Nila, the School Mistress) are beautiful story-poems in which genre the poet excels. His collections of poems, such as *Utakalika*, and *Smaranika* bear ample testimony to his reputation as master story-teller in verse. "Tuma Lagi Augusta Pandara", (For You, the 15th of August) and "Aji Eo Rupara Jayantire" (To day, at the Celebration of the Silver Jubilee) are written in a satirical vein deploring the politicial and economic degeneration of the country after Independence. The poet pays glorious tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in the service of the people and the country in the poems, "Bastaye Chaula" (A Bag of Rice), "Sarangadhara" and "Rama Devi". The poet's deep love for nature finds expression in the beautiful country vignettes contained in the poems "Biday He Mora Mati" (Farewell to My Dear Village) and "Khola Ei Prantare" (In this Open Meadow). "Gotie Sapara Atmakatha" (The Autobiography of a Snake) is the bitter and poignant self-expression of a revolutionary poet who, like his kind, is often misunderstood by his contemporaries. *Surya O Andhakar* also contains some reflective poems of which "Dubibi Ethara" (I will Drown This Time) is a fine specimen. In a superb manner it expresses the insatiable quest of the human mind for the unknown.

Gadanayak's deft handling of words and poetic metre is evident all through his work.

Durga Charan Kuaner

1976 Award

Kishori Charan Das

Thakura Ghara

Cuttack Students Stores, Cuttack; 1975; 218 pp.; Rs. 12.00

"Sri Kishori Charan Das, distinguished Oriya short story writer, poet and essayist, was born in 1924 at Cuttack. A student of History and Law with a brilliant academic career, he joined the Indian Audit and Accounts Service in 1950, and is at present an Expert assigned to the Government of Switzerland by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation. Sri Kishori

Charan Das has been writing for the last thirty years, his forte being the short story. Five collections of his stories have been published and one of them–'*Mani-Hara*'–won the Orissa Sahitya Akademi award in 1976. Many of his stories have been translated into various Indian and foreign languages.

Thakura Ghara is considered an outstanding contribution to Oriya literature for its subtle interpretation of relationships, revealing analysis of human urges, flashes of irony and tenderness and sympathy."

Thakura Ghara (The Deity's Room) is Kishori Charan Das's fifth collection of stories. *Thakura Ghara* has twenty stories, and almost all the stories have one element in common, that is, a strong sense of detachment from the events narrated coupled with an equally strong ironical attitude towards life.

The title-story, the longest one in the collection, is about a dying woman, the head of the house, who ultimately does not die. But the apprehension that she is about to die, because of which her sons, daughters, and daughter-in-law have all been brought together round her bed in a state of vigil for days and nights, has led to interesting mental revelations for each–a psychological tension motivated by self-interest, pride and elation. Thus what dominates the situation is not an atmosphere of death or dying apprehensions, but a psychological complexity where desires quietly clash and reclash only to promote an attitude of mockery and irony. The Deity's Room has the power to restore a person from the clutches of death, if prayers are offered properly which probably was the case of the grand old woman. But what it seemingly does, at another level, is a throw-back to a death-like existence for the members of the house *vis-a-vis* the old woman though apparently there are feelings of happiness and relaxation. Thus this is how the youngest daughter feels–"Oh Lord! I bow to thee thousand times. You have heard my prayers. You have let my mother live.....What a fool I was. How could I think that she was going to leave us? She was only trying to frighten us. That's what she does always.... We couldn't have let her die. Who is there for us except her? What else is there? She has sucked us through. She has trodden all our hopes and desires, clipped all our wings, and in return has brought us happiness. She knows where our good lies, she knows all. She asked father to die early because he would not have been happy

if he had lived long. None of us could escape from the shackles of her love. The elder brother tried. He restlessly jumped at the sky. But could he, could he succeed?" Irony is pervasive in the structure of the story. It not only integrates the attitude with understanding but also defines the basic point of view, which relates to both the complexity and mystery of human personalities living in contact with each other.

Similarly in the first story "Rati Kukkura" (The Night Dog), the incessant barking of dogs at night, which irritates a young couple, is ultimately silenced as the dogs get killed along with human beings during a midnight encounter among rival political groups. But the dogs barked because they were on heat, a very natural thing political 'convictions' was both unnatural and self-destructive. Yet the young couple are happy that the dogs have been killed and they will no more irritate them at night. Similarly in the next story entitled "Chalanta Gadi" (Running Train) the account is from the point of view of a child, a passenger in the train, who wonders why adults are so concerned about death, which is in anyway an inevitable consequence of running time (symbolized by the running train), and not items of life which alone can bring happiness, like the child meeting her pet cat at the end of the journey.

The stories of *Thakura Ghara* have individually self-contained structures and points of view. At the same time they can be seen together projecting one attitude and one point of view which, at one level, are related to family and society, but at another level, they go beyond that to provide an insight into human psyche and existence.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

1977 Award

Kali Charan Patnaik

Kumbhara Chaka

Cuttack Students Stores, Cuttack; 1975; 454 pp.; Rs. 35.00

"Sri Kali Charan Patnaik, distinguished Oriya author and playwright, was born at Baramba, Orissa, in 1898 He passed

his matriculation in 1916 in Ist Division but could not pursue higher studies due to his father's death. In a creative career which spans more than six decades, he has written 40 plays and published 3 collections of poetry, 10 books on music, and edited *Ragachitra*–an illustrated 17th century palm-leaf manuscript on Indian Ragas. Sri Patnaik served as Court Musician to Gajapati Rama Chandra Dev, the Ruling Chief of Puri in 1923. He has edited magazines devoted to literature and music and is a pioneer figure in Orissa stage. He started his own gramophone disc pressing company in 1954 and has also written and directed two Oriya films. Sri Patnaik was elected a Fellow of the Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1968 and the Sambalpur University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature in 1975.

Kumbhara Chaka is considered an outstanding contribution to Oriya literature for its authentic depiction of socio-cultural changes in Orissa during the last seven decades, its creative perception and sensibility, and rich, poetic language."

Kumbhara Chaka (The Potter's Wheel) is an autobiography of Kali Charan Patnaik (1986-1978), the foremost dramatist, lyricist and reputed stage director of Orissa in the modern times. He wrote a number of mythological, historical and social plays which earned unprecedented popularity and brought a new lease of life to modern Oriya drama in the forties. Similarly as a lyricist he composed innumerable songs mostly in the traditional Oriya metre and rhyme, and due to his incessant efforts Orissan dance and music, particularly Odissi dance, came to be recognised as a classical dance.

Kumbhara Chaka depicts vividly his life-long devotion to the development of culture and literature of Orissa through drama, dance and music. *Kumbhara Chaka* portrays the then contemporary society of the ex-states of Orissa including the then contemporary court life. The decline of the traditional art form and the introduction of a new epoch in which the author took active part, have been vividly described in it. The story of the late Patnaik–the artist's life, passing through a series of vicissitudes and finally achieving success, has been treated with the liveliness and freshness of novels. One important part of the book is its language. It is idiomatic, and colloquial with a strong poetic flavour, and is full of out-of-the-way-terms and phrases which excite and startle the reader. *Kumbhara*

Chaka's style as well as the content together make it a very significant book published in recent years in Orissa.

Janaki Ballabha Mohanty

1978 Award

Ramakanta Rath

Saptama Ritu

Lark Books, Bhuvaneswar; 1977; 118 pp.; Rs.9.00

"Sri Ramakanta Rath, distinguished Oriya poet, was born at Cuttack, Orissa in 1934. He obtained his Master's degree in English Literature from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack in 1956 and joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1957. He has served in various capacities under the Govt. of Orissa and the Central Government and is at present Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (Department of Agriculture). Sri Rath began writing poetry while he was studying in the college but his first collection of verse *Kete Dinara* was published in 1962. Two subsequent collections *Aneka Kothari* and *Sandigdha Mrigaya* were published in 1967 and 1971 respectively. The Sahitya Akademi Award winning collection was published in 1977.

Saptama Ritu is considered an outstanding contribution to Oriya literature for its mature sensibility, compact structure, a mellow and intensely human sense of tragedy and a very competent use of the language of symbolism."

Saptama Ritu is the fourth collection of poems by Ramakanta Rath. Rath is a leading poet in the new poetry movement in Orissa, and his total poetic achievement so far has given shape and viability to this movement which few other poets have done.

Saptama Ritu contains 39 poems as well as a discussion on poetry and poet's craft by the writer in the form of an Epilogue. In this, that is, adding a critical piece to one's own poetry collection, Rath is probably the only Oriya poet, and he has done this consistently

in all this poetry collections. These discussions are full of illuminating insights and they have generally added a new dimension to Rath's total body of poetry. The title 'Saptama Ritu' is itself illuminating, which points to a time which is beyond the traditional division of 6 seasons *(Rasu)*, beginning from summer to spring (*Grishma, Varsha, Sarat, Hemanta, Sisir, Basanta*), and hence beyond that which is within the concept of time-cycle.

The first poem of the collection, entitled "Dwitiya Bichar" (Second Trial), for example, deals with a vision that comes flitting from time to time, a voice which one hears as if not heard at all, and a desire which is more manifested in its unfulfilment.

Similarly, the second poem "Chhutir Smruti" (The Memory of Holiday) also exhibits a longing for something which is apparently unattainable and comes only in a 'dream-awareness' but for which the mind always worries. The desire to attain the unattainable, and yet which appears to be within one's own power to attain, and which becomes like a silver lining in an otherwise dark cloud can be seen in many of Rath's poems.

Ramakanta's poems have a tough structure. They have both an ironic wit and controlled emotion, and the point of view is provided by a continuing tension between the two. This is particularly so in *Saptama Ritu* where the complex structure of the poems indicate an equally complex but nonetheless integrated understanding of life.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

PUNJABI

1955 Award

Bhai Vir Singh

Mere Sainya Jio

Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi; 1971 (Third Edition) iv+82 pp.; Rs. 3.00

Mere Sainya Jio is the last major poetic work of Bhai Vir Singh, father of modern Punjabi literature. Pulling Punjabi writing from the traditional moulds and format of *qissas* and *janamsakhis*, Bhai Vir Singh broke new grounds both in content and in form. He tried verse libre, freed Punjabi poetry from the rigidities of rhyme and introduced what he styled as *sirkhandi chhand* in a big way in his *mahakavya* entitled *Rana Surat Singh*. Bhai Vir Singh undisputedly marks a turning point in Punjabi poetic tradition and heralded a new era that ushered in eminent poets like Mohan Singh and Pritam Singh 'Safeer', Harbhajan Singh and Jaswant Singh Neki.

Essentially a seeker of spiritual truth and a mystic, one finds that Bhai Vir Singh has 'arrived' in *Mere Sainya Jio*. In poem after poem, he talks about his spiritual journey–his longings, his search, his anguish and then his fulfilment. It is His own grace that has blessed him:

Those who love me
Come to my door
Longing for a glimpse;
Those whom I love
I go to them.
Their door is my door

He has a beautific glimpse of God in the blossom of a rose bud. And he is left wondering how the Almighty could be contained in the narrow folds of a flower. It is this wonderment that he shares with his readers.

His mouth is shut:
When you take me in your embrace
I am left with no words on my lips.

But it is not all other-worldliness that the poet is preoccupied with the collection. In his poems entitled "Hath Kar Wal" and, "Rasna Uchar Wal", Bhai Vir Singh advocates spiritual pursuits along with honest, hard work for earning one's living.

And it is not true that preoccupied as he is with the message, Bhai Vir Singh is less satisfying in the poetic quality of his verse. He continues to be as sensitive, as suggestive, as rich in imagery as ever. At times words trip on his lips with fleeting nimbleness succeeding, most eminently, in reflecting the twilight of the spiritual mood, not so easy to arrest by a less proficient pen.

It is indeed a major work from a major Punjabi poet and is destined to have an abiding place in Punjabi literature.

K.S. Duggal

1956 Award

Amrita Pritam

Sunehure

Sikh Publishing House, Amritsar; 1955; 94 pp.; Rs. 2.00

A collection of lyrics *Sunehure* though first published in 1955, was dedicated to the year 1953, when Amrita Pritam was fully and madly engrossed with the love-yearnings of Sahir Ludhianvi–an eminent Urdu Indian poet. As per her own confession in her autobiography *Rasidi Ticket* and *Mein Jama Tu*, all these poems (excepting one) are the product of pangs of the author for her lover (Sahir).

Though the bewailment in these poems is the result of her individualist agony, yet the poetess has been able to extol her subjective feelings to the objective human level. This transmutation of subjectivity into objectivity is the main poetic trait of this book. With her progressive bent of mind, she hints at a socialistic pattern of society, equality of rights, joint ownership of land, hatred for war and yearning for

everlasting world peace. The poet in her, with her ideological aspirations, expresses dissatisfaction with the prevalent socio-economic base of society.

She is an aesthete who expresses her intensity of emotions effectively. Her minute observation of nature helps her in properly utilizing the method of contrast, finding fit images and exploring appropriate symbols. She builds a rapport with nature through her human perception and lends an apparent similarity and co-relation of subjective human experience to the prevalent objects of natural reality. At times, she gives new meanings to the traditional aspects of nature. Her 'folkloric' touch is also visible in the selection of her rhythmic poetic diction and utilization of folk-beliefs.

Besides many lyrics in this collection, the poem "Sunehure" is a long lovable lyric.

S.S.Uppal

1959 Award

Mohan Singh

Wadda Vela

Hind Publishers, Jallandhar; 1958; 80 pp.; Rs. 2.00

"Sri Mohan Singh (b.1905 in Mardan, Punjab) is a poet, short story writer and critic. He was also the editor of *Panjdarya*, a Punjabi monthly."

Wadda Vela contains fourteen poems, twelve ghazals and a ballad. In spite of its slimness, the collection is a major contribution to Punjabi poetry.

Mohan Singh's greatest asset is his intimate knowledge and superb command over the language. He seems to choose each word with extreme care and forethought. He then invests it with a peculiar rhythm and fits it in the line in such a way that its meaning and import stand out as nowhere else. As the poem develops and ideas

unfold the flow of words, it becomes more and more intense and all embracing. There are rhythm and music, but more than that, it has a unique inner and hidden cadence and harmony.

Ghazal is a form of poetry, which has come to Punjabi through Persian and Urdu. Mohan Singh is one of the first poets who gave this form certain amount of respectability and popularity in the Punjabi language. Those who patronised this form before him could not achieve any remarkable success with it for they used it mostly as a vehicle of romantic forays. Mohan Singh gave it dimension and solidity. Half out of the twelve Ghazals included in this collection deal with socio-economic and philosophical themes. For example the eighth ghazal has it:

In more than half the orchard autumn is at its height
How then friends, dare we talk of spring and flowers?"

Wadda Vela proves that Mohan Singh is essentially a romantic poet of the nineteenth century. Quite a few of his poems revolve around love and the memories of the days past–those beautiful, golden days full of love and romance, which are now like a dream.

Yet, in the ballad entitled "Cheer Par" and several other poems, Mohan Singh touches upon the economic and social problems facing our society.

Carpenters' hands bleed...
the end of inequal distribution, however,
is not yet in sight.

There are two touching poems on Kalidasa and Mahatma Gandhi as well.

Wadda Vela, like Mohan Singh himself, will always stand as a landmark in Punjabi poetry.

Narenderpal Singh

1961 Award

Nanak Singh

Ik Mian Do Talwaran

Navyug Publishers, Delhi ; 1962 (Second Edition) 451 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"S. Nanak Singh (1897) is a leading novelist of Punjab, who has already more than fifty works to his credit. *Ik Mian Do Talwaran* is a historical novel based on the life and activities of Kartar Singh of Sarabha, leader of the revolutionary Ghadar Party founded by a group of patriotic Indians living in the USA. The novel is remarkable for its craftsmanship and its powerful characterisation."

Ik Mian Do Talwaran based on the history of the Indian Ghadar Movement of 1914-15, is a well known Punjabi historical novel by late S. Nanak Singh. This rebellious movement unsuccessfully tried to liberate India from the clutches of the English Empire. Defective organizational-structure of the party, lack of military genius, incapable leadership, lack of arms and experience, inability to maintain secrets, etc. were the various causes responsible for its failure. Laxity in the organization can be judged from the fact that S. Kirpal Singh–a secret agent of the police, joined the Ghadarites in February 1915 and came to know all the secrets of the Ghadar Party within a few days. Consequently, stern measures taken by the Government and the brutal methods adopted by the Punjab Police crushed the Ghadar Movement within a few months.

It is also clear from the novel that the rebellion of 1915 was basically planned in the United States and Canada, by Indians who had settled in these countries. But, this novel is based only on those incidents which took place on the land of Punjab. The movement was truly national and secular in its character. It attracted Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims to its fold. Though most of the Ghadarites were Sikhs, Gurudwaras were their main centres of activity. But, it had nothing to do with the Sikh religion as a whole. The prominent role played by some Hindu and Muslim leaders, saved it from becoming a militant Sikh movement.

The whole story of the novel is directly or indirectly related with the life of Kartar Singh Sarabha, the main character of the novel. *Ik Mian Do Talwaran* is a symbolic expression used by Sarabha during his discussions with Raghbir (Beeree). It symbolizes a well known fact that two groups of people, having contradictory values of life, cannot live together under a single roof. Ultimately, this expression indicates the story of Baba Sukhdev Singh's family. His son (Sudharshan) and daughter (Raghbir) have become active helpers of the Ghadar Party through Master Dalip Singh. On the other hand, Baba Sodhi himself is pro-Government and a secret agent of the police. Clash of these two contradictory values create a dramatic situation in the novel. The novel ends with the scene of Sarabha's hanging and the suicide committed by Beeree, after murdering Ganda Singh.

Nanak Singh has very successfully created a 'fictional-image' of the said Ghadar Movement. All the three parts of the novel, ultimately create an artistic unity. Although, there are certain redundant elements in the novel, but on the whole, it is a very interesting historical novel.

Manjit Singh

1962 Award

Balwant Gargi

Rangmanch

Navyug Publishers, Delhi; 1961; 288 pp.; Rs. 24.00

Balwant Gargi (b.1918) is a distinguished Punjabi playwright who has made substantial contribution to the Punjabi stage. Some of his plays have been translated and staged in foreign countries. The award book, *Rangmanch*, is a treatise on the growth and development of Indian stage from early times to the present day and is the first systematic treatment of the subject in the Punjabi language. An English edition has also been published in the United Sates. *Rangmanch* by Balwant Gargi is an encyclopaedic book in Punjabi on the Indian theatre. In the first part, the writer has discussed the origin of Indian theatre and drama, Greek and Indian theatre, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, Sanskrit drama, classical Indian dances, folk dances, Kathakali, puppet theatre, folk-drama, Ram

Leela and Krishna Leela. The author has analysed the conventions of theatre in India and has also compared it with the west. He makes us conscious about the aesthetics and the styles which were created by the Indian playwrights, and theoreticians, of theatre, especially in India, Japan and China. He stresses the importance of Asian conventions in the growth of drama and theatre in the world.

In the second part, he has presented the growth of drama in Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Hindi, English and other languages. He has also discussed the plays by Rabindranath Tagore, Parsi theatre, Prithvi theatres, Peoples' theatre, ballet, Little ballet troop, opera, childrens theatre, amateur theatre, and in the last chapter he provides a perspective on the new trends in Indian theatre and drama in different Indian languages. In this chapter, Gargi recognizes the development of western theatre in modern times, but he stresses the need to create balance between our tradition and western conventions. We must learn equally from Natya Shastra, Sanskrit Natak, Kabuki and Noh plays of Japan, and the plays of Ionesco, Bertolt Brecht, Genet, Sartre, and other modern western playwrights who ended the realistic theatre. Gargi makes us conscious about the structural differences in western and Asian theatre, and the importance of Indian theatre in totality. Even Goethe learnt some of his devices from Kalidasa when he wrote his *Faust*. We cannot grasp the structure of Indian theatre unless we understand the semiotics of classical Indian dances, choreography, folk art, mime, and other preliminaries, this is the reason that Gargi has discussed all these aspects.

The book is well illustrated with sketches and photographs.

Sutinder Singh Noor

1964 Award

Prabhjot Kaur

Pabbi

Navyug Publishers, Delhi; 1962; 95 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Smt. Prabhjot Kaur (b. 1924) is a distinguished poetess and short-story-writer in Punjabi. Educated at the Punjab University,

Smt. Prabhjot Kaur took to writing at an early age and has published more than thirty works which include translations and books for children, besides poetry and short stories. She has travelled widely and some of her writings have been translated into other Indian and foreign languages. The State Government of West Punjab has conferred on her the title of *Rajyakavi*.

The Award book *Pabbi* is her latest collection of poems and includes new translations from Tagore, Nazim Hikmet and others. Lyrical in appeal these poems manifest a definite turn of the poetess to a philosophical approach to life and its mysteries. For its sincerity and freshness, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Punjabi literature."

Pabbi (Plateau) is a collection of poems inspired by intellectualised passion, romantically tragic in tone, suffused in rich music. Except for three or four poems which strike a different note, it is, like Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, the expression of different facets and moods of a single romantic, tragic reminiscence, devoted to a love that has its moods of despondency yet stops this side of the tragic. The opening poem "Pabbi" stirs up memories of love-life full and rich in experience, now gone somewhat blase, as would be the natural transition for all love. The moods reminiscent of such experience are varied in their imagery, and in all cases find richly musical expression. Structurally most of these poems are of the nature of songs, expressing the feelings of a consciousness that reflects and is aware of the transient nature of fulfilment in love. Interspersed are flashes of intellection, metaphysical in nature, enshrining the mystery of the changing moods of a life given to reflection on a life whose guiding force is feeling. The concluding poem "Pathar" (Mountain Slope) outlines the mood of a life whose colours have now gone grey, leaving memories of disillusionment behind.

Two or three poems touch on social themes. "Pasheman" (Repentant) and "Atom Bomb te Mahigir" (The Atom Bomb and the Fisherman) touch on social themes. The latter highlights the destructive nature of the Bomb poisoning all existence around, a curse.

There are some deeply sensitive line-illustrations. The intellectualised passion is the theme of these poems.

Gurbachan Singh Talib

1965 Award

Kartar Singh Duggal

Ik Chhit Chanan Di

Navyug Publishers, Delhi; 1963; 242 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Kartar Singh Duggal (b. 1917) is a distinguished Punjabi playwright, novelist and short-story writer. Born in Dhamial, a village in the district of Rawalpindi (now in West Pakistan), Sri Kartar Singh graduated from the Punjab University and received his degree of M.A. in English Literature. After doing research in Punjabi folkfore for sometime, he joined the All India Radio, where he has served in various capacities and is at present working in the A.I.R. Staff Training School.

Beginning his literary career as a poet at the early age of twelve, Sri Kartar Singh Duggal won many prizes in school and college, including one at the All India Kavi Darbar held at Punja Saheb. During his college days he turned to story writing and published his first collection of short stories in 1941. This brought him immediate recognition and established him as a writer with a future. He has by now written over 200 short stories, collected in thirteen volumes, which are marked for their freshness and variety. Several of his stories have been translated in many Indian languages and some of them have also been published in the west. Sri Kartar Singh Duggal has also been active in the field of drama, and has already published six full-length plays besides a large number of radio plays which have been successfully broadcast from various stations of the All India Radio. He has also published a number of novels depicting rural life in the Punjab. In 1962 the Government of Punjab honoured him as an eminent writer with a 'purse' and a 'robe of honour'.

> The Award book, *Ik Chhit Chanan Di,* is the latest collection of his short stories revealing a mature mind looking at life steadily and comprehensively. For their deep psychological insight, their vigour of narration and the excellence of short story technique, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Punjabi literature."

Ik Chhit Chanan Di is popular short-story collection. This collection contains twenty-five short stories. All the stories are well-knit and well-structured. There is a balance between the narration and texture.

Not doubt, Duggal like his other contemporaries laid stress on economic and social disparities in his stories. But, on the whole, he is interested in psychological realism. Most of his writings are directly or indirectly influenced by the Freudian concept of 'libido'.

Duggal is an expert in creating dramatic situations in his stories. "Chanani Raat Da Ik Dukhant" is Duggal's model story from this point of view. In this story, the main *dukhant* (tragedy) occurs when Mallon, a woman, willingly spends a night in the arms of her lover (a merchant) without estimating the gravity of the situation. The next morning her young daughter Mini becomes the target of taunts around, as the neighbours and relatives mistook Mini for her mother. The situation becomes more tense and crucial as they come to know that Mini's marriage is due in the near future. To escape from this intense situation, Mini commits suicide. In this way we see how the prolonged tension ultimately explodes in a dramatic way. This act of committing suicide is the climax of the situation. Here Duggal's main interest is to present a study of female psychology. "Adhi Raat Kattal", "Kulam", "Aurat Zaat", "Habib Jaan" and some other stories in this collection are also related with the same theme. After reading this collection thoroughly, we come to know that Duggal is deeply interested in psychological problems of his characters. In some stories, his approach towards this problem seems to be subjective.

Duggal has also made certain experiments in the Punjabi short story. "Ikkali" is an experimental story. The narrative element is totally missing in this story. The whole story is in a dialogue form. There are certain communication gaps in the story which the readers have to fill. To present psychic problems of his characters, Duggal

generally uses the technique of 'stream of consciousness'. This technique has evolved a new device in the context of psychological investigations. According to this technique, a character can be explored only if he is revealed "from inside out".Besides this, Duggal also uses flash back and photographic techniques in some of his stories.

In this collection, Duggal's main aim is to portray the sufferings and pleasures of human life, particularly among the middle class. On the whole, the stories included in this collection are fascinating and delightful. Besides their immense cognitive and artistic values, these stories have their wider range of appeal.

Manjit Singh

1967 Award

Shiv Kumar

Loona

Singh Sons Production, Jalandhar; 1965;, 204 pp.; Rs. 18.00

"Shiv Kumar (b. 1937) was a distinguished poet and lyricist. Born in Western Punjab, now in Pakistan, the young Shiv Kumar migrated with his parents to India during the partition and had his schooling in Batala in district Gurdaspur where the family started life anew. The misery, want and pettiness witnessed by him all around during those hectic and tragic days left a deep impress on the sensitive mind of the boy who was soon to grow into a romantic poet. While still in his teens he published his first collection of poems *Piran Da Praga* which received wide acclaim and was awarded a prize by the Punjabi Sahit Sameekhya Board, Julandhar.

Several collections of poems followed in quick succession including *Atte Dian Chirian* which won him the Punjabi State A ward and *Mainum Vida Karo* which is a poignant record of his innermost feelings during a period of illness and despondency.

The Award book, *Loona,* is the latest poetical work of this youthful poet which deals with the traditional story of Puran Bhagat in the form of a verse play. This stark tragedy of the infatuation of a woman for her step-son has received a completely new orientation at the hands of this sympathetic and unconventional poet. For its courageous treatment of a powerful theme, for its experimentation in poetic form and diction and for its deep humanity, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Punjabi literature."

Shiv Kumar has touched heights of supreme poetic expression in *Loona.* It is regrettable that very few epic poems have been written in Punjabi during the past several decades–a fact which sadly applies to most other regional languages of India as well. So, the very courage of Shiv Kumar in attempting an epic at rather a young age is in itself worthy of notice. He chose a popular theme of the ancient and traditional story of Puran *bhakta*, and transformed it into something entirely new with his sensitive imagination and interpretation of woman's place in society–then and now. The pain and the suffering as well as the deep-rooted aspirations of a traditional and emancipated womanhood are superbly depicted by the poet.

Shiv Kumar speaks through all his characters with complete sincerity and honesty. The few opening lines themselves transport readers to a unique poetic atmosphere and leave them spellbound with the choice of words and the celestial music the poet has created through them.

Which is this land of enchantment
and under what name flows this river?
Its winding path makes it look like a serpent of fire
Who thrusts his splintered tongue
through the valley–making it tremble.

The diction is so perfect that few poets in Punjabi can match it. He has welded the myths, the motifs, the symbols and the images of typical Punjabi life and mind, and that is perhaps why his appeal becomes as widespread as that of Qadir Yar, who, so far, wrote the best epic about Puran *bhakta* and *Loona*.

Shiv Kumar's *Loona* will ever remain rooted in the cultural ethos of the Punjabi, and brings the poet at par with some of our best epic poets of the past like Qadir Yar and Fazal Shah.

Prabhjot Kaur

1968 Award

Kulwant Singh Virk

Naven Lok

Navyug Publishers, Delhi; 1967; 127 pp.; Rs. 7.50

"Sri Kulwant Singh Virk (b. 1921) was born in a family of farmers at village Phullarwan in Sheikhupura district (now in West Pakistan). Sri Virk studied at Lahore and Amritsar and obtained the Master's degree in English Literature in 1942. In 1946 he began writing short stories and published his first collection *Chhah Vela* in 1950, followed by several others in quick succession. After serving in the Public Relations Department of Punjab Government he joined in 1956 the Information Service of the Government of India where he is now working.

Sri Kulwant Singh Virk's short stories have been admired by literary critics and have won him many prizes and honours. He is at his best in depicting the daily life of the Punjabi peasant. His prose style, at once lucid and down-to-earth, is remarkable for its use of the rural idiom, and has a rugged charm of its own.

The Award book, *Naven Lok*, is his sixth collection of short stories and was first published in 1967. For its vivid realism and deep insight, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Punjabi literature."

Naven Lok (New People) is a collection of short stories. The stories in it portray the changes that have come over Punjabi society during the past few decades. Important among these stories are "Shernian" (Tigresses), about young women cycling from town to teach in villages, free from all fear of molestation; "Namaskar" (Homage), in which

a young woman doctor goes to work in a rural dispensary; and "Naven Lok", a landlady where-talks freely with prospective tenants; all marking a stage further than the break-up of the old feudal society in Punjab, as portrayed in Virk's earlier stories.

Sant Singh Sekhon

1969 Award

Harbhajan Singh

Na Dhupe Na Chhanve

Navyug Publishers, Delhi; 1967; 112 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"Harbhajan Singh (b. 1920) is a distinguished poet and scholar. Born at Lumding, Assam, Sri Harbhajan Singh received his early education at D.A.V. High School, Lahore. Having lost both his parents very early in life, he grew up as a lonely boy who sought solace in singing and composing verses. This seems to have helped his poetic talent to manifest itself fairly early.

After leaving school Sri Harbhajan Singh was employed first as an English teacher in a school and then as a Hindi teacher in a college. While engaged in teaching, he continued to pursue higher studies and obtained the degree of Ph.D. in Hindi Literature. He is at present Professor of Punjabi and Head of the Department of Modern Indian Literature, Delhi University.

A poet of deep sensitivity and mellow charm, Sri Harbhajan Singh has brought to Punjabi poetry freshness of thought and idiom. His approach to life is marked by a sense of humanity and breadth of vision.

The Award book, *Na Dhuppe Na Chhanve,* is the third collection of his poems and marks a new maturity in the poet's outlook and expression. For its bold experimentation in form and for its profundity of emotion the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Punjabi literature."

Being a poet of modern sensibility, Harbhajan Singh talks more of his inner-self than outer-self. In fact, most of the poems in

Na Dhuppe Na Chhanve depict his inner crisis and inner conflict. Intricacies and knots of life baffle his mind and consciousness. At times he laments that his life is useless and valueless--a tree without leaves. There is no direction, no destination and certainty in life. Ignorance is a bliss for most people. Those who have an inner-awakening and deep insight cannot enjoy this bliss.

Harbhajan Singh presents his views with powerful and penetrating satire. That is why, the reader feels the poems, enjoys them and learns from them. He is pained and perturbed to see the hollowness and hypocrisy of life. He is again distressed and disturbed to see corruption everywhere. He feels that god-like appearances do come in this world again and again but even then evil exist here.

In some of the poems, the poet talks about love and its impact on life. Sometimes love entices him and gives him solace and satisfaction. At others, it tortures and torments him. But love is not lust or physical craving for the poet. It is the union of minds and souls. Again in this world, livelihood is more important than love.

Throughout the book a sense of anguish and uncertainty prevails, yet it is not defeatist in outlook. Symbolic presentation strains the reader a bit to reach the core and heart of the poems. But the poetic diction, poetic approach and poetic portrayal make the book interesting and thought-provoking. The poet fully knows what to say, when to say and how to say. No doubt, he is quite serious and sober, yet he nowhere talks loudly or burdens the readers with his views and ways.

Ajit Singh

1971 Award

Dalip Kaur Tiwana

Eho Hamara Jiwana

Arsi Publishers, Delhi; 1972 (Second Edition); 102 pp.; Rs. 4.50

"Dalip Kaur Tiwana (b. 1935) is a distinguished novelist and short story writer in Punjabi. Educated at Mahendra College,

Patiala, Smt. Tiwana received her degree of Ph.D. in Punjabi Literature. She is now working as Reader and Head of the Punjabi Department, at the Evening Institute of Post-graduate Studies, Punjabi University.

Smt. Tiwana has published six collections of short stories and five novels in Punjabi. She has received the Punjab Government's Award for her collection of short stories entitled *Sadhana*. She has also been nominated as an expert in Punjabi for children's literature.

The Award book, *Eho Hamara Jiwana*, is her second novel published in 1968. It depicts the pain and helplessness of a village woman frustrated in love. For its authentic portrayal of the rural setting and economy of expression the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Punjabi literature."

Eho Hamara Jiwana presents vicissitudes in the life of a helpless woman, Bhano. She loses her husband shortly after marriage. His memory haunts her and she decides to end her life. Her attempt to commit suicide by drowning is frustrated by a stranger who later accepts her as his spouse. Narain is a good-for-nothing fellow but he has a house in a village and owns a piece of land. He is addicted to narcotics and looks old for his age. Bhano accepts her new role without much ado. She adjusts herself to her new social surroundings rather well. She, however, gets a jolt when her husband weds another woman, Bhagwanti, because she is childless. In due course, Bhagwanti provides Narain with a son and heir. Bhano's prestige in the household sinks further. Before long, she is bundled off to someone known to Narain. She is made to leave her 'home' for a new pasture.

Tiwana has conveyed in this novel, the message that woman is still an appendage to man. Her life acquires a meaning only when her name is linked with the name of a man, however stupid a nincompoop he may be. Even then she has no roots in her household and can b[illegible]iven off, when unwanted. Bhano is a symbol of women's que[illegible] identity. She longs for a home but her longing remains unfulfilled. She understands the peculiar situation in which she finds herself [illegible] cannot give vent to her feelings. She prefers to remain silent. Her words, however forceful, cannot change the course of her life. She must accept what comes her way. She

is a victim of man's high-handedness, jealousy and whimsicality. The author seems to be posing a question–"How long will woman remain a nonentity?" With deft touches, the novelist has delineated the ethos of a particular stratum of society. In spite of being a 'two-inches of ivory', this work brings to the surface the irony of man's false avowals of camaraderie with women under all circumstances. This novel is in fact a poem in prose, pathetic yet fascinating.

N. S. Tasneem

1972 Award

Sant Singh Sekhon

Mittar Piyara

Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana; 1970; 103 pp.; Rs. 7.50

"Sant Singh Sekhon (b. 1908) born at Dakha in the district of Ludhiana. Sri Sekhon received his higher education at Lahore and then became a lecturer in English Literature at the Khalsa College, Amritsar, in 1931. Later he worked as a college Principal at Ludhiana, Patiala and Jullundur. He now devotes all his time to literary pursuits.

Endowed with a keen insight into the creative process and a firm believer in progressive ideals, Sri Sekhon has made a lasting contribution to literary criticism in Punjabi. Besides his critical works, he has also published a number of full-length plays, short stories, essays, one-act plays and a novel. He was a member of the Indian Writers delegation to the Asian Writers Conference at Tashkent in 1958 and has been honoured as a writer by the Punjab Government in 1965.

The Award book, *Mittar Piyara*, is a full length play, first published in 1970. Woven round the character of the great revolutionary leader Lenin, the play also provides a deep insight into the currents and cross-currents of Indian national struggle for freedom. For its depth of vision and powerful characteri-

sation, the play has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Punjabi literature."

Mittar Piyara (Comrade Lenin–a dear friend of India) is a historical drama based on Indian revolutionaries, including M.N. Roy, Shauqat Ali, Nalini Gupta, V.N. Chattopadhyaya, Bhupinder Nath Datt, Gyan Khoje, Abdur Rabh, Mohd. Zakaria, Ubi-ullah, Rattan Singh and Santokh Singh who met Lenin, in order to seek political guidance in socialistic consciousness and anti-imperialist thought. Mrs. Tania, a beautiful and highly intelligent woman, imparts to them political knowledge in the University, which was set up by the U.S.S.R. to give revolutionary direction to the progressive leaders coming from India and Eastern countries.

The story deals with the political situation which arose in India during the third decade of the twentieth century when the Indian National Congress was leading the Independence movement based on non-cooperation and non-violence. The Akali movement was rebelling against the 'Mahantshahi' in Gurdwaras. Lenin and other political scholars classified it as an anti-imperialist force against British dominance. All the revolutionary leaders, assembled in Moscow and Tashkent, were attaining political analysis from their dear friend *Mittar Piyara* Lenin who was going to present his thesis in the third international meeting of socialisitic countries.

The author has collected historical records of rare discussions and presented them in a dramatic sequence in a way that represents Lenin as a great friend of India. His political evaluation of Indian political parties and institutions have proved prophetic.

At times, the language of the dialogue sounds unrealistic but it breaks the monotony of this intellectual play through some sensuous dialogues between Tania and Punjabi revolutionaries Rattan Singh and Santokh Singh. Even Lenin shows a soft corner for the beautiful Tania, which adds some romance.

Compiled on the historical eve of Lenin's first birth centenary, this play is a realistic portrayal of Lenin. The style of flash-back through dialogue is a big contributory force employed by the author.

K. S. Kaang

1973 Award

Harcharan Singh

Kal, Aj Te Bhalak

Navyug Publishers, Delhi; 1972; 71 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"Harcharan Singh (b. 1914), born in Sheikhapur district (now in Pakistan) was educated at Lahore where he attended playwriting and production classes conducted by Mrs. Norah Richards, and wrote his first full-length play in 1937. He has actively worked for the development of Punjabi drama and stage and has written and produced a large number of plays. He has more than thirty published works to his credit and has participated in several literary conferences including the Afro-Asian Writers Conference held at Tashkent in 1958. At present he is working as Head of the Punjabi Department and Director, Speech & Drama Department at the Punjabi University, Patiala.

The Award book, *Kal, Aj Te Bhalak* is his recent full-length play exposing the vices in our present day political life. For its keen insight and subtle characterisation, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Punjabi literature."

The theme of *Kal, Aj Te Bhalak* revolves around the person of a so-called hermit, and shows his past, present and future, all in a moment of revelation. Harcharan Singh enters his phase of modern writing with this play but cannot altogether shed off his traditional style or approach.

The author has clearly divided his *dramatis personae* into black and white. They can be easily classified into the victims and the wrong-doers. The poetic justice he metes out is typical of Harcharan Singh. The play ends in a hopeful note.

Harcharan Singh experiments with the modern style of fantasy. In this play, the day-dreaming (or wishful thinking) of the Mhant is the burden of this drama, and as the Mhant himself puts it "he lives his past, present and future" in this fantasy of his.

The dialogues are crisp and have a double-edged meaning. The situations are dramatic and symbolic at the same time, and even the names of the *dramatis personae* are consistent with their characters. At times, the preacher gets the better of the dramatist, but on the whole the performance is that of a master playwright. The strings do not get loose or out of control. The village *mirasis* enliven and avert the otherwise tense situation. They serve as a chorus. Nothing is lacking or superfluous.

Here, the dramatist holds the scalpel like a skilled surgeon, but the physician in him is rather weak and meek; however it endeavours to usher in a brave new world in which there would be no injustice, no exploitation, and the shadows of the cloudy past will not stretch into the bleak present nor threaten a rosy future.

S. Soze

1974 Award

Sohan Singh Seetal

Jug Badal Gaya

Sital Pustak Bhandar, Ludhiana; 1972; 322 pp.; Rs. 10.00

> "Sri Sohan Singh Seetal, distinguished Punjabi author, was born in 1909. He started writing poetry from his childhood. He wrote his first novel in 1947. Uptill now, he has contributed 11,000 pages to Punjabi literature. He is translated in Hindi and English also.
>
> *Jug Badal Gaya* is considered an outstanding contribution to Punjabi fiction for its refreshing realism and high social purpose."

Jug Badal Gaya (The Changed Times), a novel about a rich peasant Lakha Singh, who keeps Tejo, the young wife of his servant of a scheduled caste as his mistress and has a son, Jamil, by her. Change of populations of the two parts of Panjab consequent upon the advent of Independence, brings Lakha Singh as a supplicant for land allotment to compensate for the land he has lost in Pakistani Panjab. Jarnail Singh is the dealing clerk of such files in the Rehabilitation Department

at Jullundur. He keeps the file concealed until Lakha Singh acknowledges Tejo as his legitimate wife and Jarnail Singh his legitimate son.

The treatment of the story is marked by strong realistic effects, except for the rather unconvincing conclusion.

Sant Singh Sekhon

1975 Award

Gurdial Singh

Adh Chanani Raat

Navyug Publishers, Delhi; 1972; 167 pp.; Rs. 5.00

> "Sri Gurdial Singh, distinguished Punjabi novelist and writer of short stories, was born in 1933 in Jaitu, a town in Punjab. His early short stories were published in the late fifties. He began his career as a skilled labourer but shifted to the teaching profession as a primary school teacher in 1954. After twenty years of teaching at various schools, he is now a lecturer in Punjabi at Brijinder College, Faridkot. He has published more than twelve books so far, six of which are novels. Five of his books have received State awards. His novel *Marhi da Diva* has been translated into Russian. The Akademi Award-winning novel has also received the first Nanak Singh Novelist Award from the Government of Punjab.
>
> *Adh Chanani Raat* is considered an outstanding contribution to modern Punjabi literature for its originality of theme and the maturity of its outlook towards the many problems of "la condicion humaine."

Gurdial Singh depicts the tragic and wasted life of the peasants of the Malwa region of Punjab with their mute suffering and life of toil. *Adh Chanani Raat* (Half-Moon Night), the story, like a play made on the Aristotelian model, remains confined to a small village. The chief character is Modan, a peasant in a Malwa village, who is the victim of a conspiracy of circumstances. To avenge the

insult heaped on his family by the *lumbardar* of the village, he shoots him. For this crime he is given life imprisonment. After serving his term in prison, he returns to the village, feeling lonely, except for his friend Ruldu. After sometime a widow comes into his life, whom he marries and fathers a child but the woman is whisked away on some pretext by her parents and sold off to someone. In the meantime, Modan is attacked by the sons of his earlier victim. A little before he dies the woman with whom he had found some happiness comes to console him in the last moments of his life. Thus ends his unhappy, empty existence. The total impression is of starkness, reflecting the character of the soil on which these characters labour. These novels of Gurdial Singh have lent voice to the hard Malwa region for the first time.

The language used is Malwa dialect of Punjabi. While it is natural for the dialogues, it is a little out of place when it intrudes into the narrative portions. The writer, however, steps from Malwai into central, standard Punjabi, which has a somewhat jarring effect. But such defects may be considered minor in this early period of Punjabi literature.

Gurbachan Singh Talib

1976 Award

Narenderpal Singh

Ba Mulahaza Hoshiar

Seva Sahitya Bhawan, Delhi; 1975; 166 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri Narenderpal Singh, distinguished Punjabi novelist, was born in 1922 at Kania Bungalow, Punjab. He was commissioned in the Army in 1942 and served in West Asia and later in Jammu & Kashmir. Besides serving as India's Military Attache in several Indian Embassies, he was also Deputy Military Secretary to the second President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. After his retirement, he now edits the monthly *Byword* and heads the Vikendrit Group of publications and is a member of the National Commission for UNESCO. Sri Narenderpal

> Singh has travelled extensively, lecturing at various institutions and universities abroad. A recipient of many national and international literary honours, he has written over forty books.
> *Ba Mulahaza Hoshiar* is considered an outstanding contribution to Punjabi literature for its futuristic vision, broadbased human and moral viewpoint, gripping narrative and variety in characterisation."

Ba Mulahaza Hoshiar has the unique distinction of being the most controversial novel in the annals of Punjabi fiction. It has been ciriticised and appreciated, condemned and eulogized both for what it is and what it is not. The novel has been charged with eroticism, obscenity, cheap sensationalism, sacrilegious violation of religious susceptibilities of a particular community, and plagiarism too. On the other hand, it has been extolled as a sensitive, poignant depiction of the existentialist enigma of man, of his sense of inner void and outer purposelessness forced on him by the flux of values that has deprived modern techno-industrial superstructure of an abiding axiological basis in the absence of which the dialectic of the contigenent and the essential, earlier taken care of by religion, remains unresolved by science. For some, *Ba Mulahaza Hoshiar* is a Messianic hope for the future of mankind, while for others it is nothing but an absurd exercise in abracadabra.

Having been conceived by its author as a futuristic fantasy, it is free from the constraints of realism, verisimilitude and probability. It is a bold experimentation exploring a new fictional form for expressing modern reality in a way different from the traditional representational techniques.

The main scene of the novel opens up at the Kennedy International Airport where thousands of passengers and visitors get stranded due to heavy snow-fall that blocks all air and ground traffic. The hero of the novel, Avtar Singh who has gone to the airport to receive his beloved Moria, an American Peace Corps volunteer, on her return from India, is also one of the trapped persons in the terminal buildings. The situation at the airport worsens with the collapse of the services and amenities and the disappearance of the eatables into a black market that soon springs up there. Political vested interests give a new dimension to the tragedy when the Mayor of New York with an eye on the next Presidential election joins the fray. The crisis brings under sharp focus the inherent weakness of our

technological civilization. The breakdown of the arrangements at the airport, in a sense, symbolizes the collapse of the value-system. The resultant situation of 'Valuelessness' is presented through lurid scenes of homosexuality.

The lopsidedness of our materialistic civilization, as the author seems to perceive it, is symbolically presented in the form of facial distortion that the victims of a new disease (named Hemi Parisic by the novelist) happen to develop, along with some other symptoms like blank looks and paralysis of mental faculties. With the disease spreading far and wide, the scene moves on to India which offers the cure out of its *bur* tree hailed as the saviour of mankind. That the author does not attempt to present the so-called 'spiritualist' East as an answer to the 'materialist' West is clear from the fact that Moria is disillusioned by hypocrisy and superstition. The author visualizes a return of nature (symbolized by the *bur* tree) as a cure and corrective to the lopsided materialism of modern civilization.

Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia

1977 Award

Sohan Singh Misha

Kach De Vastar

New Age Book Centre, Amritsar; 1974; 95 pp.; Rs. 12.00

"Sri Sohan Singh Misha, distinguished Punjabi poet, was born at village Bhet in Kapurthala district, Punjab, in 1934. He obtained his M.A. in English from the Punjab University College, Hoshiarpur, in 1957. After a nine-year spell of teaching at the college level, he joined the Jullunder station of All India Raio as Producer, Spoken Word, and continues in the position. Sri Misha has been writing poems since the last 25 years and has four volumes of poetry to his credit. His poems are prescribed as texts in various courses from the 6th standard to the post-graduate classes. He also translates from English and Hindi into Punjabi. The collection which won him the Sahitya Akademi Award also received the Punjabi State Award for poetry in 1974.

Kach De Vastar is considered an outstanding contribution to Punjabi literature for its equipoise of intellect and emotion, lyrical intensity, contemporary sensibility and deep human commitment."

Sohan Singh Misha better known as S.S.Misha is one of the well known contemporary poets of Punjabi. *Kach De Vastar* has two portions–one containing poems and the other *ghazals*. In this collection the poet has portrayed many aspects of the present times. There is an atmosphere of fear, suspicion and distrust everywhere. In a way, every one is attired with a livery of glass and everyone is cautious to protect it from being broken or cracked by the other.

Life is full of struggles, hardships and odds for the common man. If man recognizes and then fully depends upon inner strength and confidence, he can face them bravely. There is exploitation of man by man. Man has yet to see good and sunny days.

The poet preaches amity, friendship and brotherhood and condemns communal disharmony, bloodshed and tension. To him the hypocrisy and selfishness of the modern man are disgusting. Penitence and remorse are the only ways of forgetting the bloody past. A clear optimist, the poet feels those who desire and dare can get. Love and understanding can prove an oasis in the arid and strife-torn life.

According to him physical cravings and relationships are no alternative to the union of minds and souls. Pure and selfless love leaves behind penetrating and everlasting fragrance even after the beloved departs.

Ajit Singh

1978 Award

Gurmukh Singh Musafir

Urvar Par

Sarla Prakashan, Delhi; 1975; viii+143 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"The late Sri Gurmukh Singh Musafir–distinguished writer of short stories and poet in Punjabi, was born at Udhowal, now

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"The late Sri Gurmukh Singh Musafir–distinguished writer of short stories and poet in Punjabi, was born at Udhowal, now

in Pakistan, in 1898. He was educated at Training College, Lahore, and joined the Indian National Congress in 1922. This was the beginning of a hectic political career which led him to a number of organizational and elective offices, culminating into the Chief Ministership of Punjab in 1966. But Sri Musafir continued to be active in the literary field and led the Indian delegations to the Writers Conferences at Japan and Baku in 1961 and 1965 respectively. He has nine collections of short stories and seven collections of poetry to his credit. Sri Musafir died in 1976.

Urvar Par is considered an outstanding contribution to Punjabi literature for its warm, human portrayals, sympathetic depiction of social and moral relationships and its gentle irony and humour."

Urvar Par is a collection of twenty short stories, which shows Musafir at his best. Broadly, they can be divided into three compartments: depicting political, social and economic aspects of our life and living. Musafir, besides being a short story writer, was also a poet and quotations of his own verses here and there enliven the collection, making it more like a beautiful bouquet.

The title story is regarding the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. Ceasefire has just been announced and two old friends, Brigadier Rattan Singh and Brigadier Abdul Aziz, who were second lieutenants together meet accidentally and go over the years of their mutual friendship. These are few touching moments and Musafir ends the story with his own couplet:

Walls may intervene to cross your sight
Miles may intervene and take you far
Yet those whom you love
Are always close to your heart.

The story dealing with Jallianwala Bagh makes the historical event come out so alive that those who know Amritsar seem to be walking through its streets. Stories like "Gulab da Phul" and "Principal Khushal" are satirical in tone and content and fulfil a social purpose. In "Chummi Dey Chor", Musafir takes you through a journey stretching over several years and one can enjoy every bit of it.

The is a sense of humour that establishes a direct and sympathetic relationship between the reader and author which accounts for the author's popularity.

Musafir does not seem to bother much about technique, which has become so important to some of the other modern short story writers. Nor does he care much to go into choosing, polishing and chiselling his language. But he knows his people and hence speaks to them in their tongue which they understand best.

Urvar Par will always remain a popular short story collection with Punjabi readers.

Narenderpal Singh

RAJASTHANI

1973 Award

Vijaydan Detha

Batan Ri Phulwari

Rupayan Sansthan, Borunda, 1972; 521+333 pp.; Rs. 20.00

> "Sri Vijaydan Detha, distinguished Rajasthani author, was born in 1926 and graduated from Rajasthan. He has written four books in Hindi and ten volumes in Rajasthani. He edited many literary journals and is the founder and Secretary of *Rupayan Sansthan*, in village Borunda, working for folk-literature. One of the tales from the award-winning book was filmed by Mani Kaul.
>
> *Batan Ri Phulwari*, which is the first Sahitya Akademi award-winning book in Rajasthani, is considered an outstanding contribution to Rajasthani literature for its deep study and delineation of folklore."

Out of the 21 folk tales compiled in this book, ten are related to the motif of snakes. The other eleven deal with various topics, such as fairy tales, didactic tales, tales culminating in riddles, tales of ghosts, thieves, etc.

Though basically all these are folk tales, the stylistic treatment given by the author has made a considerable change in their texture. To derive different conclusions from the existing forms of some of these tales, the author has given twists and turns to the prevalent text, thus trying to superimpose his own ideals. Apart from merits of literary worksmanship in such attempts it is a tragedy that the originality of the tales has been set aside. A warning to this effect ought to have accompanied this book, telling people that they should not be misguided into believing that these are folk tales in the real and academic sense of the term.

Any observing mind having a chance to listen to professional story-tellers could very well appreciate the way they describe events

and portray a lively picture of characters and an interesting description of their actions. Detha has followed the pattern in his own way and presented a literary description of actions, events and feelings of characaters during the process of the story.

He has a good command over language and knows it well to use the appropriate phraseology decked with fitting idioms and proverbs. He also knows how to coin words suiting them to his needs and giving them a local colour which may be difficult to be singled out even by a discerning eye.

As he is in the habit of doing most of the talking by himself, there is a general paucity of dialogues. But whenever he has chosen to indulge in such a practice his achievements are not inferior by any standard. He seems to be at home when there is an occasion for him to deal with the feelings of his characters. He takes much interest in dipping into the psychological depths of the minds and hearts of the variety of characters and offers his sympathies in a subtle and artistic way. He seems to be endowed with a rare gift of forgetting his own self and transforming it into the various moods of his people in the tales. It is strange that such a gifted artist should have taken to folk tales to show his talents, which has unnecessarily pushed him into the sphere of controversies alleging disruption of the folk tale structure.

All these minor points apart, Detha is an exceptionally good fiction writer, well versed in the art and craft of the technique, deserving whole-hearted appreciation from all sober critics of the genre.

Rameshwer Dayal Shrimali

1975 Award

Mani Madhukar

Pagfero

Akath Prakashan, Jaipur; 1974; 160 pp.; Rs. 25.00

"Sri Mani Madhukar, distinguished Rajasthani poet, was born in 1942. After earning his Master's degree in Hindi from the University of Rajasthan, he edited a number of literary magazines

and is now the editor of *Akriti*, the journal of Rajasthan Lalit Kala Akademi. He has written short stories, poems, novels and plays both in Rajasthani and Hindi. The Dakshina Sahitya Sangham gave its highest award to his Hindi novel *Safed Memne* and his play *Rasa Gandharva* has been awarded thrice in All India Drama Festivals.

Pagfero is considered an outstanding contribution to Rajasthani literature for its grasp of the ironies of contemporary life, intensity of sensibility and its having given new meanings to a traditional language."

Pagfero contains eighty-two poems. The subject matter of all the poems is poverty, exploitation, the futility of age-old superstitions, failings of the Government, the hypocrisy of leaders, the varying moods of personal frustration, etc. Unlike most of the other Rajasthani poets, Mani Madhukar's poems do not look like mere translations of their Hindi counterparts. His grasp over the language, with all its idioms and phrases, his style and manner of expression, and above all his insight into the vastness and subtlety of local culture prove to be big assets. So far as the thematic approach is concerned, there is nothing novel or unsual about it.

Mani is at his best in giving a meaningful expression to the dumb voices of oppressed and exploited people. His dreams of an awakening and revolution, though seemingly superficial and garbed manifestation of his own frustrated mood, resounds at times, with the echoes of mass-awakening in the style of Maykovsky. Coming from a middle class family, as he does, Mani has depicted his environment in a masterly way. He has risen above 'all isms' and prejudices. His poems on the crude and sensuous aspects of sex hardly fit in the scheme. He is comparatively less unintelligible in his unconventional imagery. We may expect more from this promising poet, it being his first attempt in the field.

Rawat Saraswat

1976 Award

Kanhaiya Lal Sethia

Leeltans

"Sri Kanhaiya Lal Sethia, distinguished Rajasthani poet, was born in 1919 at Sujangarh, Rajasthan. When he was preparing for his B.Com. at Calcutta in the late 1930s, he returned to Rajasthan only to plunge into the Indian struggle for freedom. He had already begun writing poetry and his *Agni Vina*, a collection of revolutionary verse, was published in 1940. He also took active part in politics and social service in Rajasthan but resisted the temptations of a political career. He is also associated with many educational and cultural institutions of Rajasthan. He has written 18 books which include some in Hindi.

Leeltans is considered an outstanding contribution to Rajasthani literature for its freshness of diction, deep spiritual values, and the depiction of the tensions between Indian thought and technological civilization."

Leeltans is a collection of 68 poems. Kanhaiya Lal Sethia, the author, views poetry as a purgative for the soul and a manifestation of human passion. Through poetry the soul expresses itself and moves to resolve tensions and contradictions. According to the poet, *Leeltans*, thus is the absorption of the ego, the awakening of the consciousness and its expansion, the surrender to service and the resolution of dualism. Most of the poems reveal an affirmative view of life based on authentic experience. Knowledge without experience only brings chaos, and our objective is not to surrender to this chaos but to find a way out of it. This objective involves a concentration away from the senses to achieve a state of non-involvement. It is from this vantage-point that the poet views today's civilization and mentality. Since the poet has strong faith in the unchanging values of life, he is critical of both the urban and Westernized cultures. In the urban culture all over the world, the natural sensibilities of human life are being crushed mercilessly and in the Western culture, an artificial conflict has been created between

man and nature. In his poem "Piccham 'r Purab" (West and East), the poet contrasts the dominant aspects of Western and Eastern culture. In this context, the poet suggests the values of self-surrender and service through the powerful symbols of the lamp and the seed. The poem "Ratanagar" (Ocean) expresses the process of creating new values through suffering and struggle. The poet also expresses the lasting values of life through his love for nature.

The poet expresses deep sentiments and thoughts with lucidity and brevity using effective symbols and similes popular in Rajasthan. He has not spared such poets who play only on words and have no clarity of communication. In *Leeltans*, it appears, thoughts have an edge over sentiments.

Hiralal Maheshwari

1977 Award

Satya Prakash Joshi

Bol Bharamli

Hindi Sahitya Mandir, Jodhpur; 1974; vi+111pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri Satya Prakash Joshi, distinguished Rajasthani poet, was born at Jodhpur in 1926. He passed his M.A. in Hindi from Rajputana University and started his career as Lecturer in Hindi at K.C.College, Bombay, in 1956 and is at present Professor in Hindi at Prahladrai Dalmia Lions College in Bombay–an institution he helped in establishing in 1972. Sri Joshi engaged himself in writing since his school days and his first volume, containing his poems in Hindi, was published in 1956. Later he started writing in Rajasthani in which he has four volumes of poetry to his credit. He also translates from English into Rajasthani and has been editing and publishing the monthly magazine *Haraval* in Rajasthani since 1969.

Bol Bharamli is considered an outstanding contribution to Rajasthani literature for its social and psychological insights, powerful diction, mastery over poetic technique and its rhythemic free verse."

Bol Bharamli is a 'Rajasthani Khand-Kavya' and technically it gives an impression of a theme which has more to do with the flights of imagination of the poet, than with the mere facts which very often provide an apparent authenticity to the historical chit-chats.

Although Satya Prakash Joshi has acquired the popular image of a poet who preserves Rajasthani culture of considerable fertility and folksy flavour of the countryside in his poetry, but the story of *Bharamli* does not touch the finer feelings of the reader. The whole poem depicts feudal aristocracy and aristocratic demeanour and life-style of the feudal-lords who used to fall in love with their maid-servants and kept them as their concubines, but the poetic depiction is no doubt laced with the poet's brilliant wit and dazzling virtuosity.

At some places, Satya Prakash Joshi emerges as a master of diction. He is very sensitive and therefore, he executes complicated ideas and emotions with delicacy. Although he is not an iconoclastic aristocrat, but the emotions recollected by him in tranquillity, do not keep the turbulence of his soul very calm and quite.

Such silent pangs of a beautiful women's sex-hungry body and such pathos of human soul, have deepened the meaning of the poet's deep and varied expression. It is true that *Bol Bharamli* is a very long poem, overladen with unnecessary sensuousness, but at many places the poet does not lack his dynamism also because of his constant search for the purest and most complete expression of his fondness for the feudalistic past and its romantic glory. The acute sense of the quality of Rajasthani poetry as a whole without falsifying its variety–even traditional eccentricity, is characteristic of his style. It makes the composition of a complete poem around a central theme. It gives him full play for his control on diction and figurative descriptions through appropriate simile, metaphor, allegory, etc.

Megh Raj Mukul

1978 Award

Anna Ram 'Sudama'

Mevai Ra Roonkh

Dharati Prakashan, Bikaner; 1977; 149 *pp.*; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Anna Ram 'Sudama', distinguished Rajasthani novelist, poet and writer of short stories, was born at the village Runiya in Bikaner district, Rajasthan, in 1923. He lost his father early in life and had to struggle hard for his livelihood. After passing his middle-school examination, he served as a teacher in the then Bikaner State at rupees twenty a month. Finally in 1952 he obtained his Master's degree in Hindi from the University of Rajasthan as a private candidate. Though Sri Sudama had begun writing in his teens, it was his novel *Maikti Kaya Murakti Dharti,* published in 1966, which brought him wide recognition. He has published three novels, and one volume each of short stories, poems and travelogues.

Mevai Ra Roonkh is considered an outstanding contribution to Rajasthani literature for its epic representation of rural life, deeply humanistic outlook, powerful characterisation and masterly handling of language."

Mevai Ra Roonkh is one of the few creative works, has arisen out of the traumatic experience of Emergency in India. The experience at the level of individual consciousness has been integrated with the social world of a village in Rajasthan which takes on the character of a representative North Indian village.

A social novel, it presents a picture of every day life in Jeevansar, a village inhabited by people of almost all castes and occupations engaged in agriculture and related pursuits. 'Mevai Ra Roonkh' are the village traders who exploit the open-hearted simplicity, helplessness, illiteracy and poverty of the rural folk to amass wealth and reveal great cunningness in using their connections with the bureaucracy by their money-power and social relations for this purpose. Dhanji and Hazarimal are the two 'trees'. They along with the local 'tin-pot dictators' find in congenial atmosphere for

their operations in the arbitrariness, autocratic exercise of power and the callous use of force during the Emergency. The realistic picture that the novelist paints of the atmosphere of fear generated by forced sterilizations evokes pity and sympathy.

The vulgar manchinations of turn-coat politicians are portrayed effectively and the religious hierarchy is shown engaged in its age-old game of beguiling the poor village people. The picture is not, however, wholly depressing. Some young and old try to protest against the whole system.

The author reveals his keen understanding of human nature in his convincing and realistic portrayal of the inner psychology of Shivnath, Surdas, Dhirji, Padma and Isar. Other characters like Sugani Dadi, Pithio Nayak, Mahantji, Teeko, Hazarimal and his son Nathamal, Dhanji and his wife and the MLA are realised effectively. Incidents have been used to bring out the contradictions in their relations with one another on the one hand, and with the outside world, on the other. The novelist reveals as much through dialogue as through incident. The characters reflect their social and cultural background in their talk.

Sudama is a master of a uniquely engaging prose. Firmly rooted in everyday language, his style is interspersed with apt idioms and sayings.

Hiralal Maheshwari

SANSKRIT

1956 Award

Mm. P.V. Kane

History of Dharmasastra
Vol. IV

Bandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune; 1953; xxxii+926; Rs. 30.0.0

History of Dharmasastra in five volumes is an outstanding work and in a way is the Encyclopaedia of Hindu religion. The author is an Indologist of international repute.

The first, second and third volumes were published in 1930, 1941 and 1946 respectively. The extraordinary devotion to learning of the veteran author is discernible.

The volume under review comprises sixteen chapters under four sections. The first section containing six chapters covers the following topics: 'Pataka' (Sin), 'Prayascitta' (expiation) and 'Karmavipaka' (ripening or fruition of evil action). The second section comprising two chapters deals with the topics 'Antyesti' (rites after death), 'Asauca' (impurity on birth and death) and 'Suddhi' (purification). The third section contains exhaustive description of 'Sraddha', the subject of great importance from several points of view. The fourth section, the biggest one, comprising six chapters deals with 'Tirthayatra' (pilgrimages to holy places).

The author has drawn his material from almost all the treatises on the Dharmasastra. Meticulous care, lucid style, thoroughness in the classification of topics and recording of references have always been the most striking features of Kane's writings and is evident from the abundance of quotation, references and numerous foot-notes.

S.C.

seven hundred works only one hundred are available in print; the rest are either in manuscripts or known through cross-references. Sharma has described the four stages of the development of the school from the fourteenth century A.D. to the present day. These stages are marked by (1) the standardization of the founder's thought and its interpretation by Jayatirtha, (2) its dialectic and polemical fencing by Visnudasacarya, Vyasatirtha and other dialecticians, (3) elucidation of the fundamentals of 'dvaitism' by major and minor commentators, and finally, (4) the rise of a new 'genre' of devotional literature in Kannada under the celebrated mystics of the Haridasakuta. In our times Oriental scholarship has been under the charm and spell of Sankara's monism positing its faith in 'Nirguna Brahman' and the doctrine of 'Maya'. Dualistic Vedanta advocating 'saguna' nature of independent Brahman and the reality and efficacy of Prakrti has been a little known stream of Vedantic thought. Sharma's work corrects this distortion and brings in focus the realistic trends in Indian philosophy. In doing so he has successfully constructed the history of Vedantic Dualism. Samkhya, Mimamsa, Nyaya, Vaibhasikas Sautrantikas, dualistic Kashmir Saivites also share some of the opinions and arguments of the Madhva school. An outline of the realism in Indian philosophy and its comparison with the Madhva

Sri Kaviraj had his early education in East Bengal, and later graduated from the Maharaja's College, Jaipur, in 1910. After completing his Post-graduate studies at the Queen's College, Varanasi, he was appointed in 1914 Chief Librarian of the Saraswati Bhavan Library and a Reader in Post-Vedic Studies at the University of Allahabad. He collaborated with Dr. Venis in editing the Saraswati Bhavan Texts which have been published by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. In 1924 he was appointed Principal of the Government Sanskrit College from where he retired in 1937 on account of indifferent health. The University of Allahabad conferred on him the honorary degree of D.Litt. in 1947, and the Banaras Hindu University in 1955. In 1964 the President of India conferred on him the title of Padma Vibhushan.

An erudite scholar of Sanskrit literature, religion and philosophy, Dr. Kaviraj has devoted long years to the study and research of ancient literary tradition and texts and has contributed a number of monographs and prefaces in English, Hindi and Bengali. The Award book, *Tantrik Vangmaya Men Shaktadrishti,* is a collection of his erudite articles written in Hindi on the subject, now published in book form for the first time. This exhaustive study of the various aspects of the Tantra school of Indian philosophy is a monument of laborious research carried on for a period of forty years. For its rare insight into the intricacies of the subject and for its learned exposition, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to the literature dealing with Sanskrit Research."

Gopinath Kaviraj was a savant who represented traditional Indian learning and philosophical and spiritual quest in a modern form, and with his ever-penetrating insight presented a thorugh elucidation of the Tantric tradition in its various aspects. He has the unique credit of presenting with authenticity, comprehension and mystic insight, the lore and secret of the various shades of the Tantric Agamas with their esoteric and practical significance. He also brought to light various texts of these systems which shed light on the varied unexplored facets of the mystic philosophy of the Tantras.

Tantrik Vangmaya Men Shaktadrishti is basically a series of lectures delivered at the Bihar Rashtra Bhasha Parishad, Patna. This is in continuation to the author's previous work *Bharatiya Sanskrit aura*

seven hundred works only one hundred are available in print; the rest are either in manuscripts or known through cross-references. Sharma has described the four stages of the development of the school from the fourteenth century A.D. to the present day. These stages are marked by (1) the standardization of the founder's thought and its interpretation by Jayatirtha, (2) its dialectic and polemical fencing by Visnudasacarya, Vyasatirtha and other dialecticians, (3) elucidation of the fundamentals of 'dvaitism' by major and minor commentators, and finally, (4) the rise of a new 'genre' of devotional literature in Kannada under the celebrated mystics of the Haridasakuta. In our times Oriental scholarship has been under the charm and spell of Sankara's monism positing its faith in 'Nirguna Brahman' and the doctrine of 'Maya'. Dualistic Vedanta advocating 'saguna' nature of independent Brahman and the reality and efficacy of Prakrti has been a little known stream of Vedantic thought. Sharma's work corrects this distortion and brings in focus the realistic trends in Indian philosophy. In doing so he has successfully constructed the history of Vedantic Dualism. Samkhya, Mimamsa, Nyaya, Vaibhasikas Sautrantikas, dualistic Kashmir Saivites also share some of the opinions and arguments of the Madhva school. An outline of the realism in Indian philosophy and its comparison with the Madhva school would have added to the value of this work. The history of philosophical ideas and logical postulates can stand on its own legs and should not therefore be restricted to the interpretation of and comments on the scriptures and other celebrated texts. This will be achieved by indepth analysis of Madhva's thought by some other scholars after our awareness of outstanding contribution of Madhva and his followers through the welcome work of Sharma.

R.C. Dwivedi

1964 Award

Mm. Gopinath Kaviraj

Tantrik Vangmaya Men Shaktadrishti

Bihar Rashtra Bhasha Parishad, Patna; 1963; vi+410 pp.

"Mm. Gopinath Kaviraj (b. 1887) is an eminent Sanskrit scholar and author. Born in the district of Dacca (now in East Pakistan),

Sri Kaviraj had his early education in East Bengal, and later graduated from the Maharaja's College, Jaipur, in 1910. After completing his Post-graduate studies at the Queen's College, Varanasi, he was appointed in 1914 Chief Librarian of the Saraswati Bhavan Library and a Reader in Post-Vedic Studies at the University of Allahabad. He collaborated with Dr. Venis *in editing the Saraswati Bhavan Texts which have been published* by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. In 1924 he was appointed Principal of the Government Sanskrit College from where he retired in 1937 on account of indifferent health. The University of Allahabad conferred on him the honorary degree of D.Litt. in 1947, and the Banaras Hindu University in 1955. In 1964 the President of India conferred on him the title of Padma Vibhushan.

An erudite scholar of Sanskrit literature, religion and philosophy, Dr. Kaviraj has devoted long years to the study and research of ancient literary tradition and texts and has contributed a number of monographs and prefaces in English, Hindi and Bengali. The Award book, *Tantrik Vangmaya Men Shaktadrishti,* is a collection of his erudite articles written in Hindi on the subject, now published in book form for the first time. This exhaustive study of the various aspects of the Tantra school of Indian philosophy is a monument of laborious research carried on for a period of forty years. For its rare insight into the intricacies of the subject and for its learned exposition, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to the literature dealing with Sanskrit Research."

Gopinath Kaviraj was a savant who represented traditional Indian learning and philosophical and spiritual quest in a modern form, and with his ever-penetrating insight presented a thorugh elucidation of the Tantric tradition in its various aspects. He has the unique credit of presenting with authenticity, comprehension and mystic insight, the lore and secret of the various shades of the Tantric Agamas with their esoteric and practical significance. He also brought to light various texts of these systems which shed light on the varied unexplored facets of the mystic philosophy of the Tantras.

Tantrik Vangmaya Men Shaktadrishti is basically a series of lectures delivered at the Bihar Rashtra Bhasha Parishad, Patna. This is in continuation to the author's previous work *Bharatiya Sanskrit aura*

Sadhana. It brings to light with comprehension and in lucid style, presented for the first time in Hindi, the various facets of the Tantric mysticism of ancient and medieval India with special emphasis on the Sakta viewpoint and based on a thorough study of the basic texts with the added practical *Sadhana* and insight of the learned author.

The work begins with the elucidation of the nature of the ultimate and the *leela* of the Mahasakti and deals with various aspects of the Sakta Agamas, their mystic significance, practical insight, nature of the Tantra, Sakti-*Sadhana*, evolution of *srsti* (the Sakta veiwpoint), *Samarasya* (divine harmony), *amaratva-sadhana* (acquiring immortality) through *rasa*, etc., the secret of guru-*tattva* and several other allied topics.

Incidently, the Vedic and the Upanishadic, the Vyakarana, the Buddhist and the Christian mystic viewpoints are also referred to on a comparative basis.

The book fills in the gap of a comprehensive study of the Tantric mysticism (Sakta viewpoint) in Hindi which was a long-felt desideratum. It is useful to students, researchers, scholars and general readers alike and brings home several viewpoints which still remained unexplored.

Karunesha Shukla

1966 Award

V. Raghavan

Bhoja's Sringara Prakasa

Punarvasu, Madras; 1963; xiv+1009; Rs. 50.00

"V. Raghavan (b. 1908) is a distinguished scholar and author in Sanskrit. Born at Tiruvarur in Tanjore district of Madras, Dr. Raghavan had a distinguished academic record at the Madras University, and did Post-graduate research under Mahamahopadhyaya Prof. S. Kuppuswamy Sastri earning his Doctorate in 1935. Later he joined the research department of Madras University where he has been Professor and Head of the Sanskrit Department for several years.

A painstaking scholar with keen insight and versatile interests, Dr. Raghavan distinguished himself in various fields of academic learning and the arts, and has been actively associated with a number of learned bodies in India and abroad. He has represented his country at several international conferences of scholars and was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1962. In 1964 he was elected a Fellow of the Sangeet Natak Akademi for his services to the cause of Music, Dance and Drama. In the same year he delivered the Patel Memorial Lectures on the saint-singers of India.

The Award book, *Bhoja's Sringara Prakasa*, is a monumental study of the various schools of aesthetics and literary criticism in Sanskrit. For its wide range, extensive sweep and critical analysis, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution in the field of Sanskrit research."

Bhoja is the most versatile writer of Sanskrit literature. Besides the two encyclopaedic works on poetics and aesthetics (*Saraswatikanthabharana* (SK) and *Srngaraprakasa*), his facile pen has produced a number of works on Yoga, Vastusastra, Dhanurveda and other disciplines also. Of these, *Samaranganasutradhara* (Vastusastra) and *Srngarprakasa* (SP) may be regarded the *magnum opus* of the author. The latter work presents Bhoja's views on various aspects of poetics–the art of writing poetry and poetic criticism. It also contains detailed discussions on etymology (*nirukti*), *vakrokti*, *svabhavokti*, *dhvani*, *riti*, *ukti*, *vrtti*, and *pravrtti*, the poetic blemishes *(dosas)*, *gunas*, *rasas*, the theory of dramatic performance in addition to the philosophical, Sastric and non-Sastric aspects of these and related theories and doctrines.

V. Raghavan has the credit of producing the largest work on Sanskrit criticism, basing his studies on the available manuscript–material, which has been corroborated with the theories and works of other authors in the field both flourishing before and after Bhoja. A graphic presentation of each concept and theory has been attempted in the light of the works of other authors from Bharata to Anandavardhana, Bhamaha, Vamana and others. Each doctrine has been historically examined on a comparative basis, with complete account and references and at places, some missing links of some lost theories have been reconstructed. Views of almost all principal theoreticians have been referred and critically examined in order

to evaluate the contribution of Bhoja on various theories or concepts of aesthetics.

Apart from the various poetical theories of Bhoja such as the concepts of *Rasa, Vak, Alankara, Natya sastra*, the various *sastric* and non-*sastric* aspects of his work and the philosophical background of his theories have been presented in a lucid and straightforward style.

This is a new contribution in the field of Sanskrit criticism and reveals in an authoritative manner, the encyclopaedic work on poetics it has taken to expound, and is useful for students and researchers alike. It provides a norm which should be adopted for further studies in the field.

Karunesha Shukla

1967 Award

Ramaroop Pathak

Chitrakavyakautukam

Motilal Banarasi Dass, Varanasi,; 1965; 37+146 pp.; Rs. 12.00

"Ramaroop Pathak (b. 1891) was born in a cultured and erudite family of Shahabad in the state of Bihar. Sri Pathak took to composing verses in Sanskrit while still very young, at the instance of his father who made him well-versed in classical Sanskrit literature and ancient Indian philosophy and culture. Soon Sri Pathak composed a number of original long poems in Sanskrit based on mythological and devotional themes. He devoted his youth to social service and propagation of moral values.

An erudite scholar of deep understanding and sweet disposition, Sri Pathak is a revered figure among the learned circle of Varanasi where he has been teaching Sanskrit to school students in an honorary capacity for over seventeen years. He has been president of 'Kavi-Bharati', a local association of poets, and has done much to encourage the study and pursuit of Sanskrit poetry.

The Award book, *Chitrakavyakautukam*, is a collection of Sri Pathak's poetical compositions over a long period, and includes his experimentation in the field of picture-poetry. For its deft

> handling of a difficult medium, for innovation of style and technique and for its rich imagery it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary creative writing in Sanskrit."

Chitrakavyakautukam consists of three parts. The first part has been devoted to introductory notes, editorial comments, etc.; the second part forms the main body of the composition; the third part contains a collection of various other compositions of Pathak and some of his contemporaries. It also contains a commentary in Sanskrit and a Hindi translation of all the verses exemplifying *Chitrabandhas* of the composition by the author himself.

Composition of *Chitrakavyas* has a very long tradition in Indian literature, and Pathak is one of the pioneers of *Chitrakavya* in the modern age. The present work may be called a monumental contribution to traditional Sanskrit poetry. In it the author has exhibited his marvellous command over the Sanskrit language and its elegent style. In all, he has given to us as many as 55 different forms of *Chitrabandhas*, the maximum number so far known. The author has also very skilfully interwoven the name of the *bandha* concerned in the body of the illustrative verse itself. It is this special characteristic of this composition that distinguishes it from other compositions of this nature.

Normally, for this type of compositions a poet has to labour hard to find suitable words for composing a verse that may fit into the desired form of the *bandha* which ultimately results in a word play, devoid of aesthetic joy, the ultimate object of a poetic composition.

The most appreciable aspect of this composition is that the author, on account of its simple and elegant style, has kept it free from the defect of verbal play, usually, attested in older compositions of this variety.

In this he has also excelled all his predecessors, both in the matter of presentation and innovation. For, in it he has given to us a few new forms, besides the various forms (*bandhas*) already enumerated and illustrated by earlier poets. As such the present work has made a special place for itself in the history of *Chitrakavya* in Indian literature.

Besides, the few of his minor poetic compositions, collected in this work, are the real specimen of the lucidity of his poetic presentation and fertility of his amazingly delicate imagination. As such this

is a valuable contribution to Indian literature and displays the undying spirit and vitality of the Sanskrit language, and the fascination that it still has for Sanskrit pundits.

D.D.Sharma

1968 Award

Satyavrat Sastri

Srigurugovindasimhacaritam

Guru Gobinda Singh Foundation, Patiala; 1967; xvi+112 pp.; Rs. 10.00

> "Dr. Satyavrat Sastri (b. 1930), born in Lahore (now in West Pakistan) received his early education under the able guidance of his scholarly father Pandit Charudev Sastri and obtained the Master's degree in Sanskrit from the Punjab University and the Ph. D. degree from Banaras Hindu University in 1955. The same year he was appointed as a lecturer in Sanskrit at Hansraj College, Delhi. Since 1963 he has worked as a Reader in Sanskrit, Delhi University.
>
> Dr. Satyavrat is more than a learned scholar of Sanskrit. He is a creative writer in Sanskrit. He began writing poems in Sanskrit when he was only twelve. Since then he has been writing poems without a break and has a number of published works to his credit including *Sribodhisattvacaritam*, an epic poem in one thousand verses. At once learned and original, he has been much admired for his deep knowledge and versatility.
>
> The Award book, *Srigurugovindasimhacaritam*, is an epic poem of about four hundred verses on the life of the illustrious leader of the Sikh faith. For its dignified style and its lucid expression the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary writing in Sanskrit."

Guru Govind Singh is the tenth Guru in the lineal descent of the Sikhs. He is an embodiment of Karma and Yoga. The book is a small *kavya* in four *sargas* and it describes in a nutshell the life and achievements of the Guru. The first *sarga* contains eighty nine,

second, eighty five, third, sixty and the fourth, one-hundred and thirty-one verses. It is written all through in enchanting *upajati* metre and following the directives or rhetoricians, the last verse of the first three *sargas* and the last two verses of the fourth *sarga* have been composed respectively in *drutavilambita savagata, sardulavikridita, sardulavikridita* and *malini*. There is an index of the verses at the end.

The author has narrated the scintillating character of the Great Guru–commencing from his birth at Patna upto his final departure of heaven at Nanded. The essential facts and important events of his life and conduct are expressed with considerable shrewdness as well as with epigrammatic wit and the panoramic procession of a large number of actions and incidents of his life sketch has been presented with learned refinements. The diction is elegantly polished except in a few verses of the second and fourth *sargas* where fierce fighting between the Sikhs and the Yavanas fail to rouse an imagination of heroism of a spirit of patriotism. The style has energy, pitcturesqueness and narrative motion. The depth and integrity of the Great Guru's character is a *tour de force* and in verses II/83 or III/6, this portrayal has been scrupulosuly clean with delicate lustre and sensibilities. The exemplary use of identical ideas and expressions from *Upanishads, Bhagavadgita* and Kalidasa. The use of non-Indian names like Islam, Labour, Hussain, Pathan, Panda, Avàrangajiva–to mention a few–in consonance with the metrical rules shows the author's dexterity of enhancing the spirit of Sanskrit vocabulary.

Asoke Chatterjee Sastri

1970 Award

V. Subrahmanya Sastri

Shabdatarangini

The Sanskrit Education Society, Madras; 1969; xi+64+216 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"V. Subrahmanya Sastri (b. 1907), is a distinguished savant and author in Sanskrit. Born in an illustrious family of scholars,

Sri Sastri was brought up in an atmosphere of learning and was well-versed in classic Sanskrit literature at an early age. He topped the list of successful candidates in the Nyaya-Siromani examination of Madras University and received the Pitti Munuswami Chetti gold medal. He was also awarded gold medals by His Holiness the Sankaracharya of Kanchi, the Maharaja of Cochin and the Government of Travancore. In 1940 the Maharaja of Cochin conferred on him the title of *Panditaraja* and in 1966 he received the title of *Sastraratnakara* from His Holiness the Sankaracharya of Kanchi. After working as a Reader in Sanskrit at the Annamalai University Sri Sastri now holds the post of Professor of Vedanta at the Sanskrit College, Madras. The President of India has awarded him the certificate of honour in 1969.

A dedicated scholar, Sri Sastri has prepared critical editions of a number of works on *Nyaya* and *Advaita Vedanta*. He has also produced a number of research articles on various aspects of ancient learning and has translated a manual on Advaita into Tamil.

The Award book, *Shabdatarangini*, is an original treatise dealing with the various aspects of verbal cognition. It is a critical examination of the schools of *Poorva Mimansa* and Sanskrit grammarians from the standpoint of the *Nyaya* school. For its profound scholarship and lucid exposition the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sanskrit literature."

The transcendental reality is inseparably associated with the *sakti* (power) of *sabda* (word) which is inherent in it. Before the time of creation the *kalasakti* (time power) is sundered from the *sabdabrahma*, as it were, and the cosmic process in its entirety runs in two directions–that of word and that of meaning. The supreme reality has been known as *sabdabrahman*. It is the word-essence as it assumes all verbal forms and objects signified by all verbal forms. It is neither determined by omnipotence nor it is to be measured by time or space. It is not predictable either by positive or negative description or speculation. It is completely devoid of any feature and wholly non-relational.

The book in six chapters has elaborately dealt with this problem of the philosophy of word and meaning–how a word can express

its meaning–now can there be any cognition of meaning of a proper sentence by the words which form the constituent parts of it. The different systems of philosophy hold divergent views on this and the grammarians also have their own. The author has explained the tenets of the *anvitabhidhanavadins* who observe that the power of the individual words cannot yield the meaning of the sentence in the manner in which the meaning of the words are connected with others although such meaning is inherent in the sentence itself. In his lucid and idiomatic Sanskrit the author has discussed the other famous views of the *abhihitanvayavadins* also, who hold that the words have general meanings and the logical connection between these meanings is not known from the words themselves but from *akanksha* (expectancy), *yogyata* (absence of absurdity) and *asatti* (proximity). He has further analysed the concepts and force of three kinds of meanings, directly expressed, figurative and suggested or implied. Herein also the standpoint of the different schools has been elucidated. Except his discussion on the topic '*tandulan annam pacati*' (cooks rice from parched paddy) where the explanation of the meaning of the suffix is slightly out of context, Sastri has been able to display the wonderful logical cogency of his thoughtful argument. His masterly marshalling of data is quite interesting and it not only compels recognition but commands admiration also.

Asoke Chatterjee Sastri

1973 Award

Madhav Shrihari Aney

Sritilakayasornavah

Tilak Maharashtra Vidhya Peeth, Pune; Vol. I, 1969, xx+274+31 pp., Rs. 40.00; Vol. II, 1970, xii+10+275 to 491+11 pp., Rs. 40.00; Vol. III, 1971, x+28+493 to 969 pp., Rs. 40.00

"Late Madhav Shrihari Aney (1880-1968) born at Wani in Maharashtra, was educated at Nagpur. He began his career as a teacher and later took to the legal profession. He was

soon drawn into the freedom movement and went to jail several times. He was closely associated with the activities of Indian Home Rule League and Indian National Congress. He was a Member of the Central Legislative Assembly and later a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. In Independent India he was appointed Governor of Bihar in 1948. He was a Member of the Lok Sabha for two terms. His speeches and writings in Marathi have been published in two volumes. A great lover of Sanskrit literature, composing verses in Sanskrit was his favourite hobby. He was awarded Padmavibhushan on 26 January 1968, the day he died.

The Award book, *Sritilakayasomavah,* is his only work in Sanskrit, published posthumously in 1971. It is an epic poem on the life of the great political leader Tilak and runs into twelve thousand stanzas. For its picturesque style and masterly use of language, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary writing in Sanskrit."

This third volume of *Sritilakayasomavah* opens with the photographs of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and that of the poet, M.S. Aney, a disciple of Tilak, who took an active part in the freedom struggle of India.

Sritilakayasomavah in three volumes contains nearly 12,000 verses composed between 1954 and 1967, while Aney lay on sick-bed. The third volume which won the Award, ends in the 85th Taranza (canto), beginning from the 42. The last 3 cantos were completed by editors at the time of publication.

The virtuous plot on Tilak is descriptive and extensive; realistic yet meritorious; attractive and lyrical, full of sentiments. The verses are mostly in Anushtup metre. The tragic touch on the leading patriot's sacrifice at the altar of his nation leaves the reader absorbed.

Some English names, Sanskritised, have been explained at the end. And some important photographs, including last ones of Aney and Tilak have been added. Aney's handwriting is also shown at the end. This is a great book by a great poet of the second half of the twentieth century.

Rajeev Lochan Agnihotri

1974 Award

Shridhar Bhaskar Varnekar

Shrishivarajyodayam

Sharda Gauran Granthmala, Pune; 1972; vi+300+ 80 pp.; Rs. 40.00

"Dr. S.B. Varnekar, distinguished Sanskrit poet, was born in 1919, educated at Nagpur and is now the Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Nagpur University. He has twenty works to his credit in Sanskrit, Hindi and Marathi. His thesis in Sanskrit was on Critical Survey of Modern Sanskrit Literature (1963). He has written two plays and seven volumes of poetry in Sanskrit. He has also translated *Gita* in French.

Shrishivarajyodayam is considered an outstanding contribution to Sanskrit poetry for its patriotic outlook and blending of history and poetry."

The plot of *Shrishivarajyodayam*, a historical poem, with Shivaji as its hero covers the middle half of the seventeenth century A.D. The closing days of Shahjahan, and about beginning 25 years of the rule of Auragzeb are churned by deeds of Shivaji. A number of Hindu Principalities of North India as well as Muslim pockets of South are also connected.

Divided into 68 cantos the poem commences with the cultural and religious heritage of the ancient land, especially that of Maharashtra. Shivaji is born, educated and he grows up. Gradually and systematically, with deep planning, Shivaji meets his foes. He carves out a kingdom (later on a most powerful one). Shivaji's coronation as 'Chhatrapati' is celebrated and he becomes a national hero. Heroic sentiment prevails and flows throughout the Mahakavya with Ojhas, Guna, Gauri and Vidarbhi ritis and Aryabhatti vritis. The Arthasiddhi here is for the security of Dharma.

Rajeev Lochan Agnihotri

1977 Award

Shanti Bhikshu Shastri

Buddhavijayakavyam

Shanti Bhikshu Shastri (the author); 1974; xxiv+420 pp.; Rs. 25.00

"Sri Shanti Bhikshu Shastri, distinguished Sanskrit poet and scholar, was born at Bibipur, in Lucknow district, Uttar Pradesh, in 1912. He passed his Sahityacharya examination in 1938, winning a Gold Medal, and obtained his Dr. Phil. degree from Leipzig, working under Prof. Friedrich Weller. From 1946 he taught in Sri Lanka, Santiniketan, and Leipzig, G.D.R., and retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Vidyalankara University, Sri Lanka. He has published a number of works on Buddhist studies in Sanskrit. Scores of his research papers have been published in reputed journals. He writes in Sanskrit, English, and Hindi and his dissertation on *Vakyapadiya Brahmakanda* of Bhartruhari was published in Leipzig in 1963.

Buddhavijayakavyam is considered an outstanding contribution to Sanskrit literature for its simple, straightforward style, smooth diction, and its restrained and dignified portrayal of episodes from the Buddha's life."

The book *Buddhavijayakavyam* written in the Anustup metre in chaste Sanskrit presents the life history of Lord Buddha along with his philosophical background and religious teachings. It is a Kavya comprising one hundred cantos with fifty-one *slokas* in each canto.

The veteran has painstakingly drawn out material from scattered sources in the Pali texts. The subject matter of this Kavya is very extensive. The author has presented a masterly study of all the main events pertaining to the life and deeds of Buddha as found in the rest of Pali literature. He has faithfully reproduced the facts in a simple and lucid style. The story runs smoothly in the Anustup metres and sustains the interest of the reader till the end. The thoroughness in the classification and categorization of topics is remarkable. The use of Alamkaras though rare, is natural and

spontaneous. In the end the author has an important message to give. He says that Buddhist philosophy and teachings have a great role to play in creating a healthy human understanding and restoring human values. One very interesting point in the Preface of the book is that the author has given Gautama Buddha's horoscope worked out by his friend astrologer, P.V. Sharma. The author deserves all praise for doing the uphill task of bringing out a voluminous Sanskrit *Kavya* in more than five thousand *slokas*.

S.C. Pande

1977 Award

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S.C. Pande

SINDHI

1959 Award

Tirth Basant

Kanwar

Saraswati Sahitya Ghar, Ajmer; 1957; 316 pp.; Rs. 3.00

> "Sri Tirth Basant was born in 1909 in Lukman, Sind. Essayist, playwright, short story writer and biographer he is a recipient of an award for distinguished literary work from the Government of Sind in 1943."

Kanwar is a biography of Bhagat Kanwar Ram, a saint and minstrel of upper Sind. A few biographical works have been published in Sindhi in the past, but the authors have more often than not indulged in the description of miracles of the persons concerned or have wandered about and lost themselves in the wilderness of philosophy. In *Kanwar* the author, Tirth Basant one of the master writers in Sindhi, at once takes us in the midst of saints and we are within the area of spiritualism; the 'reason' seems to us shallow. We feel the people ought to be more passionate, more convinced or as the current jargon has it, more committed. The reasons may seem to betray a certain incomprehension of the deeper human emotions; but it does not preclude some strongly held beliefs in justice, toleration, and humanitariansim.

Tirth has clearly enjoyed working on this biography, and his delight and pleasure in bringing out the episodes concerning the minstrel's life in their proper perspective enliven his attractive narration. The philosophy of the saint and ideas have been used to illuminate the narrative. In the end the description of the Karma-Yogi's funeral is at once heart-rending and generates in the reader a feeling as if he is one of the mourners in the saga of poignancy and pathos.

The book bears the character of an honouring estimation which the author dedicates to the great saint, minstrel and humanist. Tirth

has certainly made an attempt to bring everything about Bhagat Kanwar Ram, his sojourn in the realms of mysticism, his faith in truthfullness and goodness, and above all God eliminating the difference in the names of Ishwar and Allah.

Param Abichandani

1964 Award

Ram Partabrai Panjwani

Anookha Azmooda

Ram Partabrai Panjwani (the author), Bombay; 1965; 172 pp.; Rs. 2.25

> Ram Partabrai Panjwani (b. 1911), was educated at Karachi, has, since the partition of India, been professor and Head of the Department of Sindhi, Jai Hind College, Bombay. He is a devoted student and exponent of Sindhi folklore, and has written a number of books of folklore, and has written a number of books in Sindhi which include original works of fiction and plays, besides translations and compilations.
>
> The Award book, *Anookha Azmooda*, is a collection of true stories related to the author by persons from different walks of life whom the author has met during the course of his eventful career. Narrated in a lucid and vigorous prose, these stories are a commentary on life and provide vivid glimpses into the life of Sindhis since their migration from their original homeland in Sind. The book has been widely appreciated and hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature."

In *Anookha Azmooda* (Strange Experiences), Ram Panjwani narrates his experiences about various persons he comes across. He has a distinct gift for making an experience live in all its pulsating vitality. His characters have one thing in common: that they believe that good deeds are their own vindication and reward, and that God is a reality which cannot be ignored. His treatment of his subject

is simple and sober; and he writes in a style which is lucid and lyrical; and in an idiom which is characteristic of the traditions of the Sindhi language. It is these qualities which account for the remarkable success of *Anookha Azmooda:* the book has gone into five editions.

Of the 16 stories in *Anookha Azmooda,* two have been singled out for special praise: The "Baloch" and "Mohamed Gadi-a-Waro" (Mohamed, the Victoria Driver). Set in pre-Partition Sind, both are remarkable for their intense humanity and direct emotional appeal. The Baloch is a simple character who is sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit, but who uncomplainingly accepts the verdict of the court, as a retribution for the murder he had committed in the past, but for which another one had paid the price. In the other story, Mohamed (a Sindhi Muslim) shines out like a steadfast star in the murky light of the communal holocaust of 1947.

A.G. Mirchandani 'Shad'

1966 Award

Lekhraj Kishinchand 'Aziz'

Surahi

Lekhraj 'Aziz' (the author), Bombay; 1963; 470 pp.; Rs. 20.00

Lekhraj Kishinchand 'Aziz' (b. 1904) was born in a well-to-do land-owning family of Sind (now in West Pakistan). Sri Lekhraj took to writing verse very early in his adolescence. The hobby soon proved to be an engrossing one and he gradually attained mastery of the Persian prosody which was in vogue in Sindhi composition at that time. Being a teacher by profession, Sri Lekhraj has delved deep in the medieval Sufi poetic heritage and folklore of his native Sind from which he has derived not a little inspiration. Migrating from the land of his birth after partition, his poetry has acquired a nostalgia for the homeland which has given it an added appeal. Although Sri Lekhraj has also written plays and essays, his forte is the lyric or the ghazal which he has mastered with consummate

skill on the lines of the old masters. He has published more than fifteen books by now. Some of his writings are already part of Sindhi curriculum in schools and colleges.

The Award book, *Surahi*, is the latest collection of his poetical writings which bear ample testimony to his command over the form and a ripe maturity of expression. For their lyrical charm and their reflective bent, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature.

'Aziz' is considered as a 'King of ghazal writers' because of his mastery of the technique, the metre and the rhyme, as also his perfect command over the Sindhi language and its idiom. Though he has included a number of subject poems and *rubais* in his *Surahi*, it is in ghazal that he specially excels. As in the ghazals of Hafiz and Sadi, so in many of the ghazals of 'Aziz', each couplet is complete and detached in thought. In quite a few others, there is a chain of thought in the couplets which may be considered as one of the contributions of 'Aziz' towards the development of Sindhi ghazal. Given a line with a *qafiya* and a *radif*, he would compose the ghazal within minutes. Till the time of Partition his poetry was replete with Persian words, similes and metaphors (to impress Muslim poets) but on entering India, he made his composition simple and sweet.

In his poem "Atom Bomb", he emphasises the after effects of the bomb on the posterity thus;

Every woman would die longing to become a mother
Man would pine to become a father and leave a successor.
If a child is born, he would be a curse to his parents
He would be deformed so as to occupy a cot only.
No such other calamity will ever befall the world.
Nor would another Day of Judgement come again

The poet did not believe in fate but in action as could be seen from the following *rubai:*

If fate is the only thing in this world,
Why have the brave praised action?
The key undoubtedly opens the lock,
But would it succeed if the hand were not to try?

For the lyrical charm and reflective bent, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature.

S.M. Jhangiani

1968 Award

Kalyan B. Advani

Shah Jo Rasalo (Mujamil)

Smt. Liladevi C. Vaswani, Bombay; 1966; 470 pp.; Rs. 20.00

"Sri Kalyan B. Advani (b. 1911) was born at Hyderabad (Sind- now in West Pakistan). Sri Advani received his higher education at the University of Bombay. After obtaining degrees of M.A. in English Literature and in Persian he joined the D.G. National College, Hyderabad, as a lecturer. After the partition of the country he migrated to Bombay where he was appointed Professor at the newly founded Jai Hind College.

A teacher by profession, Sri Advani has devoted his entire career to the study and research of Sindhi literature and has published critical works on the poetry of Shah, Sami and Sachal. These works have received unstinted admiration of learned critics and have been prescribed in various courses of study. Sri Advani has also published original verse in Sindhi as also a Sindhi rendering of the Sanskrit classic *Shakuntala*.

The Award book, *Shah-Jo-Rasalo (Mujamil)*, the latest critical work of Sri Advani, is a sequel to his edition of the great poet's compositions published in 1958. For its deep insight into the poetry of the great master and for its scholarly treatment, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature."

Shah Jo Rasalo (Mujamil) has an introduction of dealing, e of the great mystical poet Shah Abdul (1989- his personality and character as

his poetry. The text in thirty *surs* consists of 467 pages, giving a brief introduction to every *sur* based on Indian music traditions, gist of every canto (Dastan), meanings of selected words and paraphrases of the verses side by side. The editor has also given the folk tales which form the basis of a few *surs* in the Rasalo and has suggested the allegorical interpretation of those *surs*.

Shah Jo Rasalo is considered a notable addition in the field of books on Shah Abdul Latif and Shah Jo Rasalo (Latifiat as it is called). For future studies on Rasalo and mystical poetry in Sindhi this critical edition will no doubt prove very useful and provide inspiration to scholars and researchers. The learned editor has shown critical judgment, great scholarship and keen insight in editing this classic of the Sindhi language and has proved himself to be a painstaking and penetrating literary critic.

D.K. Mansharamani

1969 Award

M.U. Malkani

Sindhi Nasar Ji Tarikh

Koonj Publication, Bombay; 1968; 426 pp.; Rs. 12.50

M.U. Malkani (b. 1896) is a distinguished educationist, scholar and author. Born at Hyderabad, Sind (now in West Pakistan), Professor Malkani received his earlier education at the local Government High School and then graduated in English Language and Literature from D.J. Sind College, Karachi, in the year 1919. After spending some years in the management of his ancestral estate in Sind, he was appointed a lecturer in English literature at the Sind College, Karachi, and was later made an Assistant Professor. After the partition of the country, Professor Malkani migrated to Bombay and worked as Professor of English at the Jai Hind College, subsequently becoming the Head of the Department. He retired

from service in 1962 and settled down in Calcutta.

Professor Malkani is a reputed scholar of English and Sindhi, and as a conscientious teacher he is gratefully remembered by his students for the charm of his personality and his versatile interests. He has published serveral scholarly works in Sindhi and English, and has made substantial contribution in the field of play-writing, dramatics, and translation into Sindhi.

The award book, *Sindhi Nasar Ji Tarikh*, is a history of Sindhi prose and is a pioneering work of its kind. For its painstaking research and maturity of judgement the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature."

Sindhi Nasar Ji Tarikh (History of Sindhi Prose) is a critical history of Sindhi prose right from 1853 to 1947, the year of Partition of India. The foreword is from the pen of Dayaram Vasanmal Mirchandani followed by seven chapters. The first chapter deals with Sindhi prose of the pre-British period, and the remaining six chapters discuss the history and development of the short story, novel, drama and one-act play, essay and criticism. The author discusses the script of the Sindhi language, the first book in Sindhi prose, and early prose writings in the new Arabic-Sindhi script. This chapter is very useful and informative as it gives particulars about works in Sindhi grammar and lexicon by European scholars as well as early prose works by native writers. The remaining chapters in different branches of prose give details about books and writers and incorporate illustrative passages from the original and critical opinion by the author on the matter as well as style.

By far the most important chapter is on Sindhi drama and one-act play, which is indeed a short history of the Sindhi stage.

This work is the first attempt made at writing the history of Sindhi prose and will serve as an important reference work for future historians of prose literature in Sindhi.

D.K. Mansharamani

1970 Award

Narayan Gokaldas Nagwani 'Shyam'

Wari-a Bharyo Palaand

Ajanta Publication, Ajmer; 1968; 70 pp.; Rs. 2.00

"Narayan Gokaldas Nagwani 'Shyam' (b. 1922) is a distinguished poet in Sindhi. Born at village Khahi Kasim in the Nawabshah district of Sindh (now in West Pakistan) Sri Shyam received his education at D.J. Sindh College, Karachi, and obtained the degree of B.A. (Hons.) from Bombay University. He then entered Government service as a teacher in Persian in November 1946. After the unfortunate partition of the country he migrated to India in 1948 and joined the secretarial service in the office of the Dy. Accountant General, Posts & Telegraphs, Delhi, where he is working since.

A person of unassuming nature and quiet manners Sri Shyam has patiently and steadily mastered the art of poetry. Starting with the composing of ghazals in the traditional manner he has gradually imbibed the contemporary sensibility and has successfully experimented with the new forms to express the complex reactions of a modern man. He has a number of published collections of poems to his credit which have been much admired by discerning critics. He now occupies a proud place in the front rank of Sindhi poets.

The Award book, *Wari-a Bharyo Palaand*, is the latest collection of Sri Shyam's ghazals first published in 1968. For its richness of imagery and exquisite use of language the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature."

Narayan 'Shyam', the master poet of Sindhi language, was considered to be essentially a poet indulging in pure romanticism. In his poems he could make time standstill and take the reader into the aura of timelessness. With his mind and soul, like a wanderer, he searched for a new world, a new life, new ego, new god. He hated the things simple and straight, and avoided the light of the

day so that at the time of dusk his imagination played with the areas of twilight, and in the process he made the reader ride a vortex of romantic feelings that gave him a feel of the infinite.

After the publication of *Maak Bhina Raabel*, 'Shyam' shook off the madness of imagination, freed himself of the grip of philosophy of romanticism, and slowly but surely drifted towards the hard realities of life which are reflected in the collection of his poems *Wari-a Bharyo Palaand* (Shirt Full of Sand). This collection earned him considerable critical acclaim. The poems tell a tale of our times–an everyday story of a man of today–today which is restless and daring. His poems bypass reason and express only feeling. They associate objects and men wide apart in space, time or both. 'Shyam' has subtle style and language and his great asset is that he presents familiar things in a new, striking and yet natural light and discloses nuances of emotion and thought.

In *Wari-a Bharyo Palaand*, Narayan 'Shyam' attempts to fulfil his compulsive urge to break through all barriers; he speaks of his innermost thoughts and feelings–he is always in the quest of the real, the stark, the bitter and the ugly.

Param Abichandani

1971 Award

Krishin Rahi

Kumach

Koonj Publication, Bombay; 1969; 128 pp.; Rs. 2.50

"Krishin Rahi (b. 1932) is a distinguished poet and short story writer in Sindhi. Born at Larkana (now in Pakistan), Sri Rahi migrated to India in 1947 and graduated from the Bombay University in 1954. At present he is employed at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay.

Sri Rahi started his literary career with a short story in 1950. He later turned to poetry and took to experimentation in various verse forms. He has also written for the stage

and the radio. He has been an active member of the Sindhi Sahit Mandal, Bombay.

The Award book, *Kumach*, is the collection of Sri Rahi's select poems first published in 1969. Ranging from personal feelings to social criticism, these poems employ a large variety of forms. For its intensity of emotion and melodious expression, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature."

Kumach reveals different forms of creative poetry, projected in the polemics of expression, phraseology and imagery.

Set against this background, the work is distinct. Old forms of Sindhi poetry have been successfully revived and new rivulets join in to swell the mainstream. Wholly new and radical thoughts about human being and universe, equitable distribution, the duel between the unconscious and conscious, the urges of libido, sensitivity to human dignity and the distinction between beauty and ugliness–all those are so ingressed that even a casual reader feels that it is simply a deluge.

Krishin Rahi in *Kumach* seems to be engaged in reinterpreting the past. His poems resurrect the mystical tradition, its nationalist hues with an immaculate precision and passion. They are marked by a distinct drive towards absorbing the rich heritage of Sindhi literature.

The poet has also meandered into new forms like free verse, Haiko and Troilet. Since he believes that forms and content are inseparable his radicalism has opened the gates of new ideas in forms traditional as well as modern.

Most of the poems of *Kumach* are notable for sharpness of content and precision of form. They make the reader merge in the situation and emerge with an experience, which at times is unique: One transcends the limitations of time and space. The poems have freshness of imagery and the poet has shown keen awareness of the problems of humanity and dangers, which it faces in today's world.

Rahi's work has flashes of deep poetic experience, expressed with varying degrees of success in perceiving the changing moods of times. The poems have elements of disillusionment, appreciation of new complexities of organised urban life but still do not tend to be cynical nor spew forth absurdities and mock at cherished ideals.

The collection has its own standards of perfection to convey the poets feelings and has an access to a set of objective realities darting through one's mind.

Laxan Bhatia 'Komal'

1972 Award

Guno Samtaney

Aparajita

Koonj Publication, Bombay; 1970; 112 pp.; Rs. 2.00

> "Guno Samtaney (b. 1934) born at Hyderabad, Sind (now in Pakistan), received his higher education at the Bombay University and then joined Government service. He is now working as an officer in the Maharashtra Government Secretariat.
>
> A voracious reader and a conscientious writer, Sri Samtaney published his first short story while he was only 15. Since then he has been contributing regularly to various literary magazines in Sindhi. By now he has four published works to his credit including a translation of a Bengali novel.
>
> The Award book, *Aparajita*, is the second collection of his short stories, first published in 1970. For its wealth of details and freshness of idiom, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature."

Guno Samtaney is one of the Sindhi writers who during the fifties hastened the process of Hindisation of Sindhi language. Guno gave to this type of written Sindhi a new sophistication, a new temperament and a new sensibility. He has claimed, not unjustifiably, to have given Sindhi language a new diction, a new idiom and a new style.

Guno also claims that the short story is his cross which he mounts again and again. Guno is a romanticist. His stories speak of unrequitted love. His characters fall in love and get separated–nay, run away

from each other and the author deeply creates luminous halos around them. In this process his stories get strewn with incidents and characters from the scriptures and the epics. This is his method of juxtaposing the classic and the modern and trying to synthesise the two. He has succeeded in creating a mystique around his writings and is the only contemporary Sindhi short story writer who has a whole book devoted exclusively to critical appraisal of his creative efforts.

Hemraj Nagwanee

1973 Award

Govind Malhi

Pyar ji Pyas

Koonj Publications, Bombay; 1972; 171 pp.; Rs. 4.00

> "Born at Tharushan, Sind (now in Pakistan), Sri Malhi graduated in Law from Bombay University and participated in the Quit India movement of 1942. He migrated to India in 1947 and has actively participated in literary and cultural activities of various organisations including IPTA. He has also written and produced a Sindhi film, and has been a member of Sahitya Akademi's Advisory Board for Sindhi. He has so far published twenty novels besides several volumes of short stories, one-act plays and translations.
>
> The Award book, *Pyar ji Pyas*, is his latest novel narrating the pathetic tale of a beautiful woman in search of sincere love. For its deep humanity and faith in lasting values, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Sindhi literature."

Govind Malhi's writings, besides being influenced by Marxist ideology, depict love for Sindh and Sindhi culture. *Pyar ji Pyas* (Thirst for Love) deals with a problem of spiritual love and carnal love. According to the writer, the woman is a symbol of beauty and the man, of strength. When conflict arises between the two, the woman becomes

the worst sufferer. The bodily attraction gives rise to sensuality only, in which one cannot get eternal peace of mind. Mohini, the heroine of the novel experienced slightly the carnal love in her spinster life. She was compelled to marry a man whom she did not like at all. Being attracted by her beauty, some more persons came in her life on different occasions, but she refused to be a victim of their sensual desires. In her entire life, she unsuccessfully wandered in quest of true love.

Malhi has artistically delineated this thirst for spiritual love in chaste and idiomatic language. As a background of this main theme, he has depicted also the life of Sindhis in Sindh and after Partition in different cities and resettlement camps in India.

M.K. Jetley

1974 Award

Lal Pushp

Hunaje Atam Jo Maut

Pirah Phuti Publications, Bombay; 1973; 126 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"Sri Lal Pushp, distinguished Sindhi novelist, was born in Larkana Sind (now in Pakistan) in 1935. He graduated in English literature was in Government service for thirteen years, but now lives on writing and edits a journal. He has published six volumes of short stories, three volumes of prose and two novels.

Hunaje Atam Jo Maut is considered an outstanding contribution to Sindhi fiction for its psychoanalytical insight and artistic concern for ultimate values."

Hunaje Atam Jo Maut (The Death of His Self) is an unusual experiment in fiction that defies the discipline and formal values of a traditional novel. It is almost devoid of any plot. It begins with the flimsiest action. A character named Kafoor (name has its own significance–meaning thereby a vapour like existence) is casually

snubbed by his friend for his habit of closing his left eye while talking to others. The writer attempts to catch the essential truth of man's life by seizing on this trivial moment. He does not elaborate the sociological contexts of human life, not that they are untrue by themselves, but because they hardly help to understand the self of an individual. He rejects all rational methods to comprehend anybody's mental and spiritual agonies. The trivial snubbing exposes Kafoor to the numerous disillusionments of life that include the subjective inequalities of circumstances, the latent hatred towards each other, the fraud of friendship, the parallel communication between body and mind, the meaninglessness of polemics, the supression of natural instincts, incoherence of situations, loss of social values, failure of personal vision, etc., Whatever seems senselessness in the novel, there is actually a great meaning attached to it. The novel moves in the depth and writer does not bother to maintain the uniformity of progress. His completed and half completed sentences and hinted inferences provide a pattern suitable to the inner movements of the sole characater. They appear unspectacular on surface but reflect effectively the hollowness of the moral existence of human being.

Harish Vaswani

1976 Award

Laxman Bhatia 'Komal'

Jee-a-Jharoko

Ajanta Publication, Ajmer; 1975; 96 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Sri Laxman Bhatia 'Komal', distinguished Sindhi poet, was born in 1936 at Kandiaro which is now in Pakistan. Besides poetry, he has written three full-length operas and many radio-features. A book on the life and works of Mayakovsky won him a Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1974. He also writes for children and his compilation 'Folk Tales of Pakistan' was published in English in 1976. Widely-travelled, he has visited Europe, North America, and the Soviet Union. He is now

poets of Sindh in 1946. Later in 1956 the University of Teheran conferred the D. Litt. degree upon him for his research on the Persian Poetry in Iran, India, and Sindh. He taught Sindh and Persian to post-graduate students in the erstwhile Sindh. After the partition of India, Sri Sadarangani moved to Delhi and taught Persian at the local Delhi College before joining as Persian Supervisor in All India Radio. He retired in 1974. Sri Sadarangani, who also writes under the nom-de-plume 'Khadim', has 4 collections of poems, a research volume each in English and Persian, a collection of essays and several translations which include such classics as *Babar Nama* and *Umrao Jan Ada.*

Cheekha is considered an outstanding contribution to Sindhi literature for its authenticity of experience, sincerity of feeling, modern sensibility and mastery over the free-verse technique."

Cheekha is H.I.Sadarangani's fourth volume of poems and second collection of free-verses. Having sensed the changed mood of the times, he has given his poetry a new twist in diction as well as sensibility and sensitivity. The collection depicts the elements of disillusioment, his experience in daily life, the corruption in the high offices, complexities of urban life and our leadership in satirical and sarcastic terms. To quote a few examples:

The flesh has been eaten away by the contractor
And the blood sucked out by the officials
Now.

In the poem entitled "Your Leader" (a satire), he has exposed the leader who has foisted himself upon the people to serve their interest but in fact will stay in a big bungalow (to enhance their prestige.) and drink (to drown their sorrows!).

'Mill Manjoon Shukrana' (Jointly We Thank) is both sarcastic and witty. It throws light on adulteration which has become a common feature of the traders :

I have mixed plenty of water in milk,
fat in ghee,
molasses in honey,
powder in sugar,

maida in *barfi,*
blotting paper in *kulfi*,
dust in wheat,
pebbles in rice,
papita seeds in pepper,
pumpkin in ketchup,
dung in asafoetida.

Let us go, together we pray.
How merciful is Lord Shiva, the credulous!

Among other interesting poems may be mentioned: "Kashmakash", "Id-Jo-Rozo", "Barsat", "Deti-Leti", "Khwab-jo-Vinjano", "Vei-navari", Aayo Ram" and "Ay Agwan".

The choice of subjects is varied and language is simple, devoid of Persian influence, with use of idiom and simile appropriately.

S.M. Jhangiani

TAMIL

1955 Award

R.P. Sethu Pillai

Tamil Inbam

Palaniappa Brothers, Madras; 1958; viii+265 pp.; Rs. 4.00

Sethu Pillai was a prolific writer of mellifluous prose just as he spoke in an ornate style. This volume of forty essays represents some of his public addresses, radio talks, magazine articles and essays contributed to special number of journals. The articles are grouped under eight sections according to media and in each of these a variety of subjects are dealt with. Tamil language and literature particularly literary appreciation, Hindu religious practices and meaning of festivals, scenes from ancient literature and other topics are written in an enchanting style which is the characteristic of the author. The articles on *Ramayana* themes, the epics of *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*, and on the Saiva hymnists are written with a rare aesthetic sensibility. There are a few essays on the poetical compositions of the national poet Subramania Bharati. Rich with poetic sentiments, these essays proclaim the greatness of Bharati as a poet of renaissance.

Sethu Pillai is to be remembered for his style and all the essays collected in this volume are a tribute to the memory of a brillliant scholar and aesthetist.

S. Sivapatha Sundaram

1956 Award

R. Krishnamurti 'Kalki'

Alai Osai

Bharathi Pathipagam, Madras; 1953; 828 pp.; Rs. 12.50

Alai Osai though not a fullfledged historical romance yet has a touch of history in its background. Though most of Kalki's writings are

great works of art, literary evaluators give *Alai Osai* an edge over his other creations for its high idealism born of a passionate love for the country, its contemporaneity and relevance to modern life and the philosophy of life it offers. Even though emotional disturbances were rocking the nation and communal differences were erupting, the freedom and peace of the country were closest to the hearts of all patriots. The reflection of historical events on society, the problems of partition, the libertine life of the Rajas, the impact of Macaulay's educational pattern on a predominantly orthodox Indian society, the challenges of transition from the old to the new, the generation gap, the birth of the socialist ideal and many other social problems are dealt with in *Alai Osai* in a very natural and uncontrived manner. Since the core of the novel is the freedom movement in which Kalki was actively involved, it is no wonder *Alai Osai* was so close to his heart.

Alai Osai offers a predominantly Hindu philosophy of life—that of acceptance of God without question. It is a wise philosophy that comes with maturity of a high order. With this novel Kalki had reached his zenith and in his mind was a peaceful contentment that he had not lived his life in vain, but left something for posterity to remember.

K. Rajendran

1958 Award

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari

Chakravarti Tirumagan

Paari Nilayam, Madras; 1956; 691 pp.; Rs. 4.00

> "Bharat-ratna Sri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (b. 1879 in Hosur in Salem district) is too well known for his services in the national field to need any introduction. His great reputation as a statesman has overshadowed his distinction as a writer of great subtlety and charm."

The story of Rama after Valmiki in Sanskrit, told some millenia ago, has been retold many a time by many poets in many tongues.

Among the Tamils the *Ramayana* by the twelfth century poet Kamban is hailed as an unrivalled classic of *maxima reverentia*. In many of the households, it is recited invoking peace and spiritual bliss. Besides this immortal work, hundreds of other writings in verse and prose telling the same story of Rama have appeared ever since the advent of the printing press in India. In the process legends and myths have accrued with the original and among the folk the story of Rama has many versions in many media. Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the scholar, statesman and thinker, thought it necessary to retell the original Valmiki version in simple Tamil prose for the benefit of the young. Week after week he contributed his writing to the populalr magazine *Kalki* for seventeen months when he was resting and keeping aloof from compelling political pressures in Tamil Nadu. It is a stupendous work and in the epilogue he says, "Rama was not conscious that he was incarnate form of Iswara, but Krishna was fully conscious of his Iswara manifestation. We must be aware of this important difference when we read the respective stories of Rama and Krishna. The inconveniences he underwent were all a joke to him. Therefore, the story of Rama is a human story...I have been writing this story particularly for the young people and besides them all mothers too will find it interesting."

The treatment is straightforward, style simple and attractive, and the narration is captivating. Although it is Valmiki retold, Kamban's original touches and deviations are incorporated to bring out the epical touch of the Tamil bard. Rajaji is a master craftsman and the work is an important contribution to Tamil literature and an addition to the Ramayana lore.

S. Sivapatha Sundaram

1961 Award

M. Varadarajan

Agal Vilakku

Paari Nilayam, Madras; 1958; 400 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Dr. M. Varadarajan (b. 1912) is a noted scholar and author. *Agal Vilakku* is a social novel portraying contemporary life

in South India. The novel has been much admired for its realistic approach, its deep interest in human emotions and its simple and effective prose-style."

Agal Vilakku is a social novel portraying contemporary life in South India.

Velu, the narrator and one of the important characters of *Agal Vilakku* is always conscious of his boyhood friend Chandran who is handsome and one who attracts the attention of others. Chandran is also intelligent and proficient in his studies. When they go to Madras and get into a college, Velu finds a change in Chandran's attitude who, not only does not fare well in his studies but also avoids his company. Mistaking the friendship of Imavathi for love and getting frustrated when her marriage with another youth is fixed, Chandran disappears. After many unsuccessful attempts to trace him, Velu learns by chance, that Chandran is living in Otacamund with a woman whose husband has been convicted for murder. After he is brought back to his village by his father, Chandran begins to lead a promiscuous life and forces his own father and sister out of the house. Velu is shocked to learn that his friend Maalan who married Chandran's sister is miserable after losing all his money at the races and that his wife has left him to live with her father. Chandran's plight too becomes miserable as he pays the price of a licentious life by contracting leprosy. After many vicissitudes, Chandran, being seriously ill, comes to Velu who receives him with affection and nurses him, but in vain. Chandran while dying, tells Velu that he resembles *agal vilakku*, the earthern lamp in all its simple purity while he himself is like a shiny brass lamp that has gathered rust.

The symbolism of the title of the novel is brought home to the reader to illustrate the differing traits of the friends. Detailed discussions between Velu and Imavathi as well as the conversations between the women characters display an awareness on the part of the characters of the problems of life in all its aspects. Life in a college hostel and its impact on students who migrate from the villages for higher studies are depicted in memorable vignettes.

The style of narration is chaste and eminently readable. Tamil culture as expounded in classics like *Tirukkural* and the code of behaviour as laid down by Mahatma Gandhi lend contemporary

realism to the novel which points out the dangers of affluence and indiscriminate living.

P.G. Sundararajan

1962 Award

Somu (Mi. Pa. Somasundaram)

Akkarai Cheemaiyil

Paari Nilayam, Madras; 1961; 288 pp.; Rs. 5.00

> "Somu (Mi. Pa. Somasundaram) (b. 1921) is a distinguished Tamil poet, short story writer and novelist. He was elected President of the Tamil Writers' Association in 1959. A versatile writer, Sri Somu has also made his mark as a successful editor and broadcaster. It was in connection with broadcasting that he had occasion recently to travel widely in England and the Continent. The award book, *Akkarai Cheemaiyil*, is the fruit of this jourey. Remarkable for its deep insight and lucidity of expression, it is a significant contribution to a branch of Tamil literature which is comparatively less developed."

This is a collection of travel articles written by Somu for the Tamil magazine *Kalki*, after his visit to England on a short assignment with the British Broadcasting Corporation. Being a good broadcaster and narrator Somu has vividly described in this travelogue all what he had seen, heard and absorbed. Particularly interesting are his visit to Stratford-on-Avon to reminisce on his experiences on his early acquaintances with Shakespearean drama, to Oxford where he found the tomb of the great Tamil scholar G.U. Pope and to Fleet Street Coffee Houses in search of the essayist Samuel Johnson. In lighter vein, he enchants the readers with his discovery of a few restaurants where Tamil Nadu delicacies could be found–during a time when such things were a rarity. Somu's visit to the European countries on the Continent reveals some interesting cameos about

the most famous landmarks in France, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy.

Although the West is no more than our neighbouring district in this jet age and job opportunities, Somu's visit to the U.K. in 1960, and his picturesque writing serialised then in one of the most popular journals were a novelty for the Tamil readers of that time. The book carries an appreciative foreword by Rajaji.

S. Sivapatha Sundraram

1963 Award

Akilon (P.V. Akilandam)

Vengaiyin Maindhan

Porkodi Veliyeedu, Madras; 1961; 794 pp.; Rs. 22.00

> "Akilon (P.V. Akilandam) (b. 1922), a distinguished and versatile writer in Tamil who joined the national freedom movement in 1941 and later served in the postal department. He resigned his job in 1957 to devote himself wholly to writing. Although Sri Akilon writes short stories, plays, essays and children's books with equal felicity, his real forte is novel. His novels have brought him much acclaim and endeared him to his readers.
>
> The Award book *Vengaiyin Maindhan* is a historical novel depicting the life and personality of King Rajendra of Chola dynasty. For its historical authenticity and ingenuity of narration it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to Tamil literature."

This novel has as its background, a glorious chapter of Chola history during the eleventh century, when Rajendra I raised the empire to its zenith by conquering Ceylon and Malaya and bringing the Ganga waters to an artificial lake in his new capital Gangaikonda-cholapuram.

The story revolves round the attempts of the Chola emperor to retrieve the Pandyan crown taken away by the Ceylonese kings when they defeated the Pandyas–the Pandyan kingdom being a Chola viceroyalty. Veeramallan, the son of a Kodumbalur chieftain, who is the embodiment of courage, takes upon himself the fulfilment

of this hazardous task. Ilango, a close friend of this hero defects to the other side and the story takes on a new turn involving a series of adventures of espionage and counter-spying. Rajendra's invasion of Ceylon results in the imprisonment of King Mahinda and his daughter Rohini. The princess becomes a bone of contention between Ilango and Veeramallan who vie with each other in securing her love. Mahinda, meanwhile tries to make use of Ilango's infatuation for his daughter for finding out the secret defences of Kodumbalur and the new capital Gangaikondacholapuram. The intervention of Arulmozhi, the daughter of Rajendra, resolves the temporary misunderstanding between Rohini and Ilango and they come together under more successful circumstances when the attempts of the Ceylon army to penetrate the Chola region are repulsed. The hazards of spying, the perils of loving a princess in the opposite camp, the intrigues of belligerent ministers and the secret passages in the Chola capital constructed by the ingenuity of the master architects of the period–all lend an air of pleasing fantasy to the narration. The obstacles to the love between Ilango and Rohini, the test to which the friendship of Veeramallan and Ilango is put to, and the majestic demeanour of the Chola emperor, are all described in such vivid detail that one feels transported to the locales of actual occurrence.

The story is replete with romantic nuances where dialogues between lovers and heroes are involved and suits the panoramic depiction of events relating to the expansion of Chola empire. Despite the running enmity between the Pandyas and Cholas, the recreation of the halcyon days of Chola conquest maintains the basic greatness of the Tamil rulers of the period.

P.G. Sundararajan

1965 Award

P. Sri Acharya

Sri Ramanujar

Paari Nilayam, Madras; 1973 (Second Edition); 376 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"P. Sri Acharya (b. 1896), a distinguished Tamil scholar, author and journalist who was born in Vittalapuram in the southern

district of Tirunelveli in a family of Tamil scholars, had a systematic course in classical Tamil very early in his childhood. He received his English education at the hands of English teachers at Tirunelveli town. After a brief career as a police official, he was drawn into the national political movement of the day and resigned the Government service to become a professional journalist. He was a friend of the famous patriot-poet Subramanya Bharati, and served as the editorial staff of *Ananda Vikatan* for a number of years with success. Since then he has devoted himself whole-heartedly to the study and exposition of Tamil literature and culture and has produced more than fifty books on various aspects of his study. He has retold the *Mahabharata*, written popular expositions of Vaishnava and Shaiva poets of the South, and many essays on *Kamba Ramayana* and other Tamil classics for the benefit of the lay reader. A popular serial writer in Tamil journals, his name is a household word among Tamil readers. At present he is working on a history of Tamil culture for a project sponsored by the Government of Madras.

The Award book, *Sri Ramanujar* is the biography of the great medieval saint and philosopher and presents a vivid account of the life and activities of a great personality, and the religious, cultural and social background of the period in which he lived. For its judicious use of the historical material and for its vivid and lucid narrative of the life and times of the great founder of Vaishnava philosophy, the book has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

This is a comprehensive biography of the great saint who established Sri Vaishnavism and expounded the principles of Visishtadvaita. The story opens with the dramatic accounts of Ramanujar, the disciple of Periya Nambi going to Thirukoshtiyur Nambi to learn the secret of Vaishnava Mantra. Ramanuja secured him the guidance of Thirukoshtiyur Nambi to learn the secret of Vaishnava Mantra. Ramanuja secured him the guidance of Thirukoshtiyur Nambi and later, that of Yadava Prakasa under whom he learnt Vedanta. Ramanujar, however, never agreed with Yadavaprakasa's concepts. After a series of vicissitudes connected with the machinations of the jealous teacher, Ramanujar succeeded Alavandar as head of

the Sri Vaishnava seat at Srirangam and dedicated himself to the preparation of a Visishtadvaita commentary for the Brahma Sutras. He was initiated into the twin truths known as 'Dhvayam' and also learnt the *Divyaprabhandam*, the Tamil Veda from Periya Nambi, another great preceptor. Ramanujar became a 'Sanyasi' following confrontation with his wife who never understood his utmost respect for others irrespective of caste distinctions. Ramanuja travelled all over the country preaching his own concept of Visishtadvaita in opposition to Mayavada.

Ramanujar's *magnum opus* in spiritual literature is *Sribhashyam* which he wrote after studying the *Bodhayana Vriddhi* in search of which he went all the way to Kashmir. His other treatises are *Vedanta Deepam*, *Vedanta Saram*, *Vedanta Sangraham* and the *Gita Bhashyam*. His exposition of Visishtadvaita philosophy consisted in the refutation of Sankara's Mayavada and in demonstrating that the Upanishads did not teach a strict monism. His concept of Visishtadvaita reconciled devotion to a personal God with the philosophy of Vedanta. His extensive reform of temple ritual was aimed at unifying the Vaishnavites and the spread of *bhakti* among all castes including the untouchables.

The author has examined a number of original texts which trace the geneology of great teachers of the faith and has made a scientific and realistic selection of authentic incidents.

P.G. Sundararajan

1966 Award

M.P. Sivagnanam

Vallalar Kanda Orumaippadu

Inba Nilayam, Madras, 1963; 408 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"M.P. Sivagnanam (b. 1906), a distinguished author, journalist and public worker, popularly known as 'Ma.po.Si', was born in a slum area of Madras city, and was obliged by poverty to discontinue his studies early and to earn his living as a

hand compositor attached to the Tamil daily *Tamil Nadu*. He, however, continued to attend evening classes and developed a deep and lasting interest in Tamil studies.

In this youth, Sri Sivagnanam actively participated in the Non-Cooperation and Swadeshi movements and went to jail a number of times. In 1946 he organised the Tamil Arasu Kazhagam and edited its organ *Tamil Murasu* for some years. At present he edits the weekly *Senkol*. He was an alderman of the Madras Corporation, a member of the State Legislative Council and has been recently returned to the State Legislative Assembly. He succeeded the late Krishnamurti 'Kalki' as President of the Tamil Writers' Association, and is the author of a number of biographies and other thought-provoking works, among them his well known studies of Tamil epic, *Silappa-dikaram*.

The Award book, *Vallalar Kanda Orumaippadu,* is the biography of Ramalinga Swami, a saint poet of the 19th century. For its lucid style, vivid narration and power of expression, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

An Orthodox Hindu and a spiritual leader Ramalingam Pillai was born at Vadalur, a village in South Arcot district of Tamil Nadu, in 1823. For nearly thirty years he lived in the city of Madras, married to his own cousin, but renouncing his married life, wandered about visiting holy places singing hymns and composing poetry. Finally, he settled down in another village Mettukuppam near his birth place and established an ashram where he passed away in 1874 under mysterious circumstances.

Ramalinga lived as a mystic and his actions were interpreted by his followers as extra mundane. As a man of humanitarian principles he established *dharmasalas*, looked after the poor without discrimination of caste and creed. He cared for the sick and the disabled. He also gave succour to animals. He was hailed by the honorific 'Vallalar'. Although not enough biographical information is available about him, he had left volumes of writing in verses which are full of material for interpretation and research. Many have attempted to write about this nineteenth century holy man based on the popularity of his poetry of spiritual content, which are recited even today by Hindus, equating them with the hymns of the ancient saints.

The present author Sivagnanam, who is a scholar of repute and an ardent admirer of Ramalinga, has attempted to interpret through the available literature the life of Vallalar with emphasis on his universalism, humanism and spiritualism, drawing parallels from the life of Ramakrishna, Raja Rammohun Roy, Gandhiji and others. That he transcended the then existing dogmas and boldly criticised casteism, communalism and atheism to emphasis not only national integration but universalism encompassing all living creatures is the main theme treated in this book–an original contribution to Tamil literature.

S. Sivapatha Sundaram

1967 Award

K.V. Jagannathan

Veerar Ulagam

Manivasagar Noolagam, Chidambaram; 1966; 154 pp.; Rs. 3.00

"K.V. Jagannathan (b. 1906) born at Krishnapuram in Tiruchirapalli district, received his higher education at the University of Madras. An ardent student of Tamil from the very beginning, Sri Jagannathan was closely associated with Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, the eminent scholar and pioneer of literary research in Tamil, and actively collaborated with him in his literary activities till his passing away in 1942. Sri Jagannathan took to literary writing while still in his teens and joined the pioneer literary monthly *Kalaimagal* in his twenty-third year. Since then he has devoted his energies wholeheartedly to the development of Tamil language and literature in various ways.

A gifted wielder of a prolific pen, Sri Jagannathan has published by now one hundred books and has enriched many branches of Tamil literature with his writings which include short stories, poems, biographies, religious and literary expositions as well as editing the classics. This has brought him well-

deserved honour from his fellow writers and readers. A man of wide interests, genial temperament, and always eager to encourage young talent, Sri Jagannathan is held in high esteem in the Tamil literary world.

The Award book, *Veerar Ulagam*, is a collection of pen-portraits of valour in various walks of life as recorded in ancient Tamil classics. For its graceful style, power of expression and masterly interpretation, it has been hailed as outstanding cortribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

Tamil literature of the ancient period had certain conventionalised patterns in the treatment of love and war. So much so that these conventions grew into set theories called *Akam* (love theme) and *Puram* (War or heroic theme). Numerous treatises have been compiled by various authors and incorporated in regulal grammatical works. The earliest of these grammatical works, *Tholkappiyam,* deals with these two theories of *Akam* and *Puram* in two distinct chapters. Subsequent literary compositions in the collections of *Akanaanooru* and *Kalithokai* highlight the love theme in beautiful lyrics, while *Puranaanooru*, *Purapporul Venba Malai, Pathittupathu* and a few others extol the theme of heroism and war. K.V. Jagannathan, a scholar moulded in the classical learning has selected certain lyrics from the work *Puranaanooru* and from *Purapporul Venba Malai* to project the heroic theme as visualised by the respective poets. Much of the selections are from the *Venba Malai* in which the poet Aiya-naarithanaar had given elaborate descriptions of heroic incidents of superhuman proportion embellished with romantic valour. The tribal art of cattle lifting and its reverse called cattle retrieval are treated elaborately. The art of warfare and spying are other aspects of this genre. The romance of goblins in the midst of dead bodies in the battle field is also part of this type of heroic literature. The author of this work has touched on all aspects of this *Puram* literature and gives a clear picture of the theme and literary convention.

S. Sivapatha Sundaram

1958 Award

A. Srinivasa Raghavan

Vellai Paravai

Mercury Puthaka Company, Coimbatore; 1957; 236 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"Born at Kandiyoor in the Tanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, Sri Srinivasa Raghavan (b. 1905) received his higher education at the Madras University and was appointed as a collegiate teacher in English literature in 1924. He is now working as Principal and Head of the Post-graduate Department of English Literature, V.O.C. College, Tuticorin. During his long educational career he has been closely associated with a number of academic bodies of the Madras and Madurai Universities and has rendered valuable service in the cause of higher education in his state.

A versatile and gifted writer, Sri Srinivasa Raghavan has made his mark in several fields of literary writings, besides proving his worth as an able journalist and editor. Besides his essays in the field of literary criticism, he has published a number of plays and learned works. He has also translated the Tamil poets Kamban and Bharati into English as well as Tagore into Tamil.

The Award book, *Vellai Paravai*, is a collection of his lyrics and short poems on a variety of themes. For its freshness, vigour, sustained power and depth of vision, the book has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

The late A. Srinivasa Raghavan was a renowned English scholar who taught languages in college in the capacity of Professor and later as the Principal. But at the same time he had a passionate love for Tamil, his mother tongue, and was equally at home with Kamban and Bharati as he was with Shakespeare and Shelley.

He was in particular a great admirer of poet Subramania Bharati and when he himself began writing Tamil verse, he followed Bharati's

style so closely that some of his lines could easily be mistaken as those of his model.

Srinivasa Raghavan wrote a large number of poems during different periods of his life and they were published in various Tamil journals from time to time. The present collection comprises 107 of his poems on a wide variety of themes ranging from the gods of the Hindu pantheon, Buddha, Kamban, Bharati, politics, emancipation of woman and poetry. He was so obsessed with the poor in this country that he wrote a long parody on the model of the Tamil composition known as 'Pillaittamizh'. Many of his poems are satires on contemporary hypocrisy and adoption of double standards by people in the higher echelons of society.

Poems like "Urvasi", "The Moonlight and Memory" and the "White Bird" are crystalline lyrics with a true poetic ring about them. Despite his seeming light-heartedness, Srinivasa Raghavan is a serious poet with a deep concern for the humanity at large and in poems like "Time" and "Drop and the Ocean", he reveals his philosophical nature and his leanings towards mysticism.

Although the poems were written on different occasions and in different moods, a Vedantic strain runs through them like a silver thread and reveals the inner depths of the poet.

T.S. Parthasarathy

1969 Award

Bharatidasan

Pisirandaiyar

Paari Nilayam, Madras; 1967; 139 pp.; Rs.2.50

"The late Bharatidasan (1891-1964) was a distinguished poet patriot of Tamilnadu. Born at Pondicherry, then a French settlement, Bharatidasan received his education in French as well as in Tamil. He joined the Neravi Government School, Karaikal, as a Tamil teacher at the tender age of 17. After

a long career as a teacher for nearly four decades, he retired from service in 1946.

A close associate and dear disciple of the great Tamil poet Subramanya Bharati, Sri Bharatidasan began writing poetry while in his teens. One of his earliest compositions was rendered into English by Bharati himself and was acclaimed very widely. Sri Bharatidasan was soon drawn into the vortex of the freedom struggle then raging all over the country, and fired with an intense patriotic fervour he wielded his pen to express the hopes and agonies of his people, and ran a number of newspapers to project the national ideals and aspirations. He published more than a dozen books of poetry and his collected works run into several volumes. He was elected a Member of the Pondicherry Legislative Assembly in 1955. Three years after his death the people of Madras erected a statue in his honour during the second World Tamil Conference.

The award book, *Pisirandaiyar*, is a verse play on the life and times of the great Tamil poet of 2000 years ago and has been published posthumously in 1967. For the lyricial beauty and the poetic charm of the composition and for its deep understanding of the history of the Sangam Age the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

Bharatidasan's *Pisirandaiyar* is a play based on the life of a Tamil poet of antiquity. Pisirandaiyar's poems as well as legends about him indicate a highly evolved personality of great wisdom and capacity for unbounded love and compassion. He belonged to the Pandian region of Tamil Nadu and was a deeply revered court poet of the Pandian king. A strange but unshakable friendship grew between him and the contemporaneous Chola king with an inevitable occasion of embarrassment when the two kings faced each other inimically. The legend of the two friends has produced in artistic and realistic detail. The strange part of Pichirandaiyar's friendship with the Chola king was that neither had even met the other but each had grown to value the other so much that when the Chola king has to give up his life in a ritual ceremony, he felt sure his friend Pichirandaiyar would join him in the ritual willed death. The legend goes that Pisirandaiyar did reach the place in time and he ended his life a! with his friend.

Bharatidasan's play recounts the life and times of Tamils in the classical age, in thirty four scenes, employing prose, verse, song and play-within-the-play device. Inadequate source material has not stood in the way of Bharatidasan's dramatic rendering which has moments of power and imagination. Perhaps one may sense the work is closer to the medium of cinema than that of the stage but there are several stirring passages of poetic excellence in the text proving to be as rewarding to the reader as any of the best works of the great poet Bharatidasan.

J. Thyagarajan

1970 Award

G. Alagirisami

Anbalippu

Tamil Puthakalayam, Madras; 1967; 224 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"The late G. Alagirisami (1923-1970) was a distinguished journalist, playwright and short story writer. Born at Idaiseval in the Southern district of Tirunelveli, Sri Alagirisami took to journalism early in his career and was editing the Tamil monthly *Sakti* at the age of 24. He later edited two Tamil dailies, one at Madras and another at Malaya, and in between worked on the editorial staff of Gandhi Works Publications. He was actively associated with a number of literary organisations and conferences.

Sincere and painstaking, Sri Alagirisami devoted all his time to writing and literary activity. Unfortunately his promising career was cut short by a heart attack in July 1970, when he was only 47. But even in that short span he had produced more than 25 published works which include short stories, novel, plays, literary criticism and juvenile literature besides a number of translations and editing. He was soon recognised as a popular author of distinction and his plays were also successfully put on stage.

> The Award book, *Anbalippu*, is the latest collection of Sri Alagirisami's short stories rich in local colour and human interest. For its simplicity of language, grace of expression and humane outlook the work has been haileld as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

Anbalippu is one of Alagirisami's nine short story collections and contains the stories "Anbalippu" (Gift), "Deva Jeevanam" (Godly Living), "Engiruntho Vandaar" (He Came from the Unknown), "Ematram" (Disappointment), "Raja Vandirukkirar" (A King has Come) "Gyabagartham" (Memento), "Alagammal", "Triveni", "Irandu Pengal" (Two Girls), "Irandu Aangal" (Two Men), "Sappitta Kadan" (Obligation for being Fed) and "Kalyana Krishnan." These are some of the best he had written, which portray a wide range of characters and situations with remarkable artistry and insight. Alagirisami's delineation of children is uniquely lively and poignant and the one other parallel one can think of in Indian writing is Rabindranath Tagore. While most of the stories are cast in uncompromising realistic mode, Alagirisami excels in lyrical prose in "Triveni", a tale about the divine visitation of Rama and Sita upon the South Indian saint-composer Tyagaraja. Even at the time it was published some 15 years ago before Alagirisami's death, the story won great acclaim and now has been included in literary anthologies in Tamil and translated into other languages.

Asokamitran

1971 Award

Naa. Parthasarathy

Samudaya Veedhi

Tamil Puthakalayam, Madras, 1968; 200 pp.; 5.75

> "Naa. Parthasarathy (b. 1932) is a distinguished author and novelisit in Tamil. Born at Nadikudi near Madurai, Sri Parthasarathy obtained the degree of Vidwan in Tamil at Madras University, and taught Tamil in several institutions. He was

assistant editor of *Kalki* for more than five years. At present he edits *Deepam*, a literary quarterly in Tamil. He is associated with a number of literary organisations including the Tamil Writers' Co-operative Society. He is also the founder of 'Power', an organisation of poets, orators, writers, educationists and readers.

Sri Parthasarathy has made his mark as a short story writer and a novelist. Early in his career he received the first prize in a short story competition held by *Kalki*, Madras. He has published more than 40 works including a collection of essays and an anthology of poems.

The Award book, *Samudaya Veedhi,* is a novel dealing with life in the world of films. For its powerful characterisation and realistic presentation, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

Samudaya Veedhi is a crisp and fast moving social novel. Style, although simple and popular, has a true literary flavour. *Samudaya Veedhi* exposes the utterly selfish and artificial way of life adopted by stage actors and film stars and describes how two of the main characters in the novel struggle hard to maintain their dignity and self-respect in that foul atmosphere.

Muthukumaran, a talented stage actor, poet and playwright in a mofussil theatre company, migrates to Madras city to better his prospects. He contacts Gopal, a former colleague who has risen to fame as an actor and a film star in the city. Gopal, who is, organising a dramatic troupe, decides to exploit Muthukumaran's talents as a playwright. He engages actress Madhavi, his protege, to act as Muthukumaran's amanuensis but much to his chagrin the two fall in love with each other. This leads to a misunderstanding among the three and Muthukumaran resents the increasingly patronizing attitude diplayed by Gopal.

A new play of Muthukumaran becomes an instant and resounding success, and the troupe is invited to stage a few plays in Malaysia. After a few performances, Gopal fractures his leg by slipping in the hotel and Muthukumaran saves the situation by acting in his place as the hero. Muthukumaran surpasses Gopal's earlier performances. On their return to India, Muthukumaran and Madhavi leave the troupe and get married.

The author maintains a tight grip over the tempo of the story and depicts his characters with consummate skill and understanding. His descriptions of the scenic beauties of Malaysia are most absorbing and enhance the reading interest of the novel.

T.S. Parthasarathy

1972 Award

D. Jayakanthan

Sila Nerangalil Sila Manithargal

Meenakshi Puthaka Nilayam, Madurai, 1970; 426 pp.; Rs. 8.00

"Born in the coastal town of Cuddalore, Sri Jayakanthan (b. 1934) was brought up in his boyhood in the office of the Communisit Party where he was self-educated. After several odd jobs in teenage for a livelihood, he finally settled down as a freelance writer.

As writer of fiction, columnist, editor and film-maker, Sri Jayakanthan has received high acclaim from the Tamil speaking public. His short stories, over 200 in number and collected in 12 volumes, speak of the humanity and heroism found in the lower middle-class people, and present a realistic picture of our fast changing society. One of his two films, based on his own novel, has received an award from the President of India.

The Award book, *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manithargal,* is a novel which deals with the plight of a girl who falls a victim to the unscrupulous elements in society. For its intensity of emotion and vivid characterisation, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

The courageous bid by a woman to rediscover her indentity, twelve years after an incident in which she had lost her virginity to a stranger, forms the central theme of this novel. After the indignation of the mother at this indignity with the resultant punishment of the daughter passes off, both settle down to a life of isolaltion spurned

by the brother of the woman. What begins like any hackneyed plot with all the ingredients fitting the formula, the narration attains multi-dimensional qualities as Ganga, the woman, locates the man who spoilt her and confronts hims with her resolve to live with him. Jayakanthan, known for his humanistic approach to his characters has succeeded in portraying Ganga who, in a social set-up, decides to come to terms with the stranger and made him understand her need for security. Prabhu, the culprit, surprised at the attitude of Ganga and painfully conscious of his own guilt, succumbs to her blandishments and finds solace in her company. He himself is alienated from his wife though blessed with an intelligent daughter who understands him. Ganga continues her contact with Prabhu despite strong objection from her brother and mother. Though the attraction is mutually emotional between them, there is no trace of the physical craving which made Prabhu take advantage of Ganga when he first met her as a college girl. The tolerance each shows the other when they almost settle down to a routine, is handled with sensitive sympathy by the author whose control over his characters enables him to present them in convincing postures.

The presence of an uncle of Ganga who is prone to treat her as a plaything for his sensuous propensities, is symbolic of the attitude of the ordinary male in contemporary society towards the exploited female. Ganga's refusal to accept marriage unilaterally proposed by her brother who is anxious to cover up the social stigma attached to the family, has the opposite effect on Prabhu who decides to keep away from Ganga as suggested by the brother. Ganga takes to drink to forget her misery, a recourse which she had put up with in good humour in the case of Prabhu.

Jayakanthan's deep insight into human behaviour and his comprehension of the effect on social levels when cultures clash, endow this novel with powerful social comment without any explicit intervention by the author at any stage. As narrated by Ganga herself, the entire story rings with a note of authenticity clearly depicting the predicament of woman like her. The technique of story-telling adopted by Jayakanthan combines in itself all the variety needed to put across a delicate problem affecting people constrained to play roles dictated by circumstances. Stream of consciousness, switching of points of view for clarity and even existentialist stances, albeit unintended, heighten the quality of the novel in which realism is sustained with literary competence. The characters would have

been real enough even without Jayakanthan having to resort to the dual task of interpreting and transliterating the English dialogue of Ganga and Prabhu.

P.G. Sundararajan

1973 Award

Smt. Rajam Krishnan

Verukku Neer

Paari Puthaka Pannai, Madras, 1972; 252 pp.;Rs. 7.50

"Smt. Rajam Krishnan (b.1925) was born at Musiri in Tiruchirappalli district as the daughter of a headmaster and scholar, and married to an Engineer in her early teens. Smt. Krishnan continued her education in libraries and at home. Her taste in reading fiction and classics prompted her to write in Tamil. She has by now published twentyfive works including novels and short story collections, besides a play and a biography on Dr. Rangachari. She is at present a director of the Tamil Writers' Cooperative Society and is well versed in many languages.

The award book, *Verukku Neer*, is a novel dealing with the conflict between patriotism and selfishness in post-Independent India. For its powerful narration and realistic presentation, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Tamil literature."

Very few writers over the past thirty years have been able to make such a sustained and fruitful contribution to Tamil writing as Smt. Rajam Krishnan has done in an impressive line up of over 25 novels and numerous novellas and short stories, all of them revolving around contemporary realities. She has done intensive travelling to many parts of India conducting research and collecting material for her novels and has visited Soviet Russia. Her's is one of the most respected feminine voices of Tamil Nadu today.

Verukku Neer, true to the tradition of the author's other novels, has a strong sense of history and geography. It is set in Tamil

Nadu in the year 1969, the centenary year of Mahatma Gandhi. The novel itself is an exhaustive discussion on the continuing relevance (or otherwise) of the Gandhian thought to the changing problems and complexities of the country since Independence on a national and political level, and the Gandhian concept of simplicity, self-sacrifice and self-reliance on a personal level. Though many characters of the novel vary differently in their attitudes towards life and in their participation in the functioning of the society, it must be said that a sense of idealism pervades throughout the novel.

The author is noted for a unique and personal style of narration and she integrates it quite successfully in this novel of ideas.

J. Thyagarajan

1974 Award

K.D. Thirunavukkarasu

Tirukkural Needhi Ilakkiyam

University of Madras, Madras; 1971; x+424; Rs. 12.50

> "Sri K.D. Thirunavukkarasu, distinguished Tamil scholar and critic, was born in 1931, received two M.A. degrees in Tamil and History and is, at present, Associate Professor at International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras. He has published sixteen works in Tamil prose, including four translations and two one-act plays and the remaining works are literary studies. The present work is the fruit of his studies of three decades.
>
> *Tirukkural Needhi Ilakkiyam* is considered an outstanding. work in Tamil for its scholarship and philosophical analysis."

This well-researched book seeks to establish the great Tamil classic *Tirukkural* as didactic literature based on the Indian concept that literature should instruct as well as entertain. The book is divided into six chapters, the first of which deals in detail with the similarities and distinctions between virtue and morality.

It is pointed out that the concept of the Tamils about *aram* is broadbased and is similar in name to the Sanskritic idea of *Dharu-*

mam. Hence, we have to regard the moral didacticism of the Sandkritic works as only a part of *aram* (dharma). It would not be wrong to hold that Tamil thinkers while they employed the Sanskrit term *needhi* (moral) used it in a sense which is wider than its root meaning; and even utilise it for connoting good conduct based on behaviour.

The nature and variety of didactic literature is examined in the third chapter. *Tirukkural* has both didactic and entertaining elements inextricably woven together, and the world extols it as didactic literature. The concept of art for art's sake and poetry for its own sake is analysed in the fourth chapter. As social concepts are intertwined in literature, it is inevitable the ideas of virtue should take precedence over other thoughts. The next chapter is a comparative study of the didactic literatures in Greek, Latin, Chinese and Sanskrit languages. It is argued in this treatise that great thinkers of Greek and China did not have the aesthetic sensibilities of Tiruvallüvar. Our forbears have accepted as didactic only those works which expound human behaviour. While poets in other languages were pre-occupied with hunger of the flesh in man, Tiruvalluvar succeeded in presenting the inner-most sentiments of the human mind without losing artistic sensibility.

The author concludes that *Tirukkural* is the best of all didactic works in the languages of the world. The great concepts found in other literatures are enshrined in *Tirukkural* in revised and better form.

P.G. Sundararajan

1975 Award

R. Dhandayudham

Tarkala Tamil Ilakkiam

Tamil Puthakalayam, Madras; 1973; 240 pp.; Rs 4.50

"Dr. R. Dhandayudham, distinguished literary critic in Tamil, was born in 1939 in Pennagaram, Tamilnadu. He has also written a few short stories and books for children. He received his doctorate from Madras University on 'The Sociological

Novel in Tamil' in 1970 and is teaching as lecturer in the Department of Indian Studies at the Malay University. He has published six books and scores of research papers in English and Tamil on Tamil literature.

Tarkala Tamil Ilakkiam is considered an outstanding contribution to modern Tamil literature for its balanced views, careful assimilaltion, analysis and simple presentation of literary facts."

Dhandayudham is one of the first academics of Tamil Nadu to make a beginning in the study of recent Tamil writing. The book *Tarkala Tamil Ilakkiam* is a collection of essays and radio talks he had occasion to construct in Malaysia. *Tarkala Tamil Ilakkiam* has two parts. The first part consists of eight essays under the titles: "Growth of Tamil Prose", "Tamil Novels", "Tamil Short Stories", "Tamil Poetry", "Tamil Plays", "Literary Criticism in Tamil", "Tamil Writing in Sri Lanka", and finally, "Tamil Writing in Malaysia". The titles are indicative of the wide ground covered by the author. The essays serve as introduction to the different genres of writing done in Tamil in recent times. It is evident that the primary function of these essays is to present certain details of achievements in various fields of writing in a cogent manner and the reader will certainly find it useful to understand the literary criteria of the author when some specific works are discussed in the second part of the book.

The second part of the book consists of twelve essays; each essay is devoted to the discussion of a particulalr work. Here too, the author has dealt with works of various kinds, short story anthologies, novels, poetry collections, one-act play, essays and a travelogue. The author has given considerable representation to works from Sri Lanka and Malaysia that five of the twelve essays dealing with writings from these countries. A Tamil reader dealing with writings from these countries. A Tamil reader of India who may not have known all these works first hand can still get a fair idea of the content and quality of those works from the manner the author has discussed the more familiar works of local authors. One of such books discussed is *Samudaya Veedhi*.

J. Thyagarajan

1977 Award

'Indira' Parthasarathi

Kuruthi-p-Punal

Tamil Puthakalayam, Madras, 1975; 232 pp.; Rs. 7.00.

"Sri 'Indira' Parthasarathy, distinguished Tamil novelist, was born at Madras in 1930. He obtained his Master's degree in Tamil, Linguistics, and South Indian History from Annamalai University in 1951 and teaches in Delhi University. Sri Parthasarathy has published numerous short stories and novels in leading Tamil journals. He has also written seven plays. During the last five years, eleven volumes comprising his novels and short stories have been published. Several of his short stories have been translated into a number of Indian language as well as French, Spanish and Arabic. *Thanthira Bhoomi*, one of his novels, has been translated into English and the Award-winning novel is being published in English translations shortly. He also edits *Kanaiyazhi*, a Tamil monthly devoted to contemporary literature.

Kuruthi-p-Punal is considered an outstanding contribution to Tamil literature for its deep social commitment, realistic protrayals, simple yet forceful style and excellent craftmanship."

'Indira' Parthasarathy came into prominence in the sixties as a writer of short stories and novels with a slightly satirical point of view, is considered as an important personality of the modern Tamil drama.

While there is no direct pointer as such an *Kuruthi-p-Punal* will pass as fiction, the novel is very close to a real-life tragedy and outrage which took place in a village in the Tanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. On a cold December night, a gang of hired ruffians herded forty-two people, most of whom were Harijan women, old men or children, into a small hut and set fire to the hut. All the forty-two perished; when they attempted to flee, they were drawn back and thrown into the fire. The world shuddered at the barbaric treatment meted out to poor farmhands by landlords just to strike

terror in their minds and consolidate the vested interests' exploitative domination. A court case went on for a long while at the Sessions and High Court but the landlord suspected to be the main cause for this ghastly act was set free for want of conclusive evidence. Ironically, thirteen years after the outrage, the landlord was found murdered near the very spot where the forty two perished.

'Indira' Parthasarathy recreates the times and the people of the event with extraordinary vividness and innovation and brings out the misery, arrogance, inhumanity and helplessness of the different characters of the bloody drama. The novel is important in that it is one of the first Tamil novels to employ Marxian dialectics as an integral part of modern fiction. *Kuruthi-p-Punal* lifts itself to considerable heights in the final pages where the protagonist like the mythical Parasuram takes a ritual oath in the river turned bloody by the slaughter of the innocents to avenge the carnage.

J. Thyagarajan

1978 Award

Vallikannan

Pudukavithaiyin Thottramum Valarchium

Ezhuthu Prachuram, Madras; 1977; 311 pp.; Rs. 15.00

"Sri Vallikannan, distinguished Tamil critic, was born R.S. Krishnaswamy at Rajavallipuram, Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu in 1920. He passed his Matriculaltion Examination in 1936 and worked as a clerk in a Government office for four years before he resolved to resign and devote himself entirely to writing. He was associated with a number of newspapers and literary journals from 1943 to 1951. Sri Vallikannan has written scores of critical articles, poems, short stories and novels and he has also translated into Tamil the works by Tolstoy, Gorky and Robert Ruark. He has completed a series of articles on the history of the little magazines in Tamil and is now writing another series on Tamil prose after Bharati.

> *Pudukavithaiyin Thottramum Valarchium* is considered an outstanding contribution to Tamil literature for its objective assessment of the new poetry in the language, its painstaking research, forceful arguments and direct and powerful style."

Vallikannan, has been associated with almost every serious literary movement or periodical publication during the past forty years. He launched on a new phase in his writing career as a chronicler by recording the history of the more serious of literary movements he happened to be associated with.

Pudukavithaiyin Thottramum Valarchium tries to trace the origin and growth of the new poetry movement in Tamil since the dawn of the twentieth century. The book consists of forty separate essays some of which are studies of independent poets or of poetry published by one or other literary periodical. Vallikannan is at his best in recalling the days of the distant past, particularly the poets and their works of the thirties and forties. His account of their evolution and achievement is greatly strengthened in authenticity by extensive quotations from various articles of literary criticism and discussion which had appeared in those days. A great number of important poems are also reproduced, some of them in their entirety. All this makes the book invaluable to a student of the literary history of modern Tamil poetry.

The book has a very useful bibliographical appendix and contains an illuminating foreword by C.S. Chellappa, the editor of the literary jounral *Ezhuttu,* and one of the prime architects of the new poetry movement in Tamil.

J. Thyagarajan

TELUGU

1955 Award

Suravaram Pratap Reddy

Andhrula Sanghike Charitamu

Andhra Saraswata Parishad, Hyderabad; 1949; 475 pp.; Rs. 6.0.0

Andhrula Sanghike Charitamu is the social history of the Andhrites as revealed through literature, first of its kind in Telugu. Suravaram Pratap Reddy was a reputed scholar and an eminent journalist in Telugu.

Divided according to the main periods of Andhra history, the author has rightly commenced it from the period of Eastern Chalukyas (11th century). The history of Telugu literature begins from Nannaya (11th century), who started rendering the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* in Telugu, which is the first poem of classical Telugu literature. Then follow the periods of Kakatiyas, Reddy kingdoms, Vijayanagar period and so on up to 1907, thus covering 900 years of history of the Telugu people.

Histories of kings and their dynasties are the usual pattern of history-writing, but such histories do not reflect the actual life of the people who lived in those times, whereas social histories are the histories of people, their culture, art, social customs, traditions, and social norms.

Though literature is the chief source of material for this history, the author has also drawn from inscriptions, writings of foreign travellers, sculptures, paintings, proverbs, Kaifiats, fugitive verses, folk songs and folk tales, and references in other literature. The author's knowledge of Sanskrit and Persian has helped him in making this social history a broad based one.

Some of the author's observations are quite interesting. For example, during the period of Kakatiyas in Warangal, the paintings that adorned the houses of well-to-do people were: Krishna with Gopies, Ahalya and Indra, Tara and Chandra, Menaka and Viswamitra. There were

about 1500 households in Warangal city whose occupation was painting of portraits. The author comments on the rarity of *sati* practice, and the origin of muslin in the port town of Masulipatnam.

The work is certainly a landmark in scholarship in view of the fact that the sources are very few and that the coins, inscriptions and lexicons mentioning certain words and expressions do not throw sufficient light on them.

D. Ramalingam

1957 Award

Chirantanananda Swami

Sri Ramakrishnuni Jivita Charitra

Ramakrishna Seva Samaj, Tenali; 1956; 440 pp.; Rs. 2.0.0

"Sri Chirantanananda Swamy (b. 1906 in Mummidivaram, Andhra Pradesh) is a gifted prose writer and has written nearly 20 books dealing with the philosophy of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. His writings are marked by distinction of style and terse expression of subtle philosophical thoughts."

This biography of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa in Telugu is based on the original Bengali sources like *Sri Ramakrishna Leela Prasanga* and *Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* besides the writings of Vivekananda and other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. The author, Swami Chirantanananda received his initiation from Swami Vijnanananda, a direct associate and disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The book is a straightforward narrative of the life of Sri Ramakrishna in its different phases, and presents the personality of Sri Ramakrishna through his words and actions, and through well-chosen anecdotes bringing out the essential humanity of the great saint. It is an engrossing story, which even an unsophisticated reader can enjoy and understand. Irrespective of one's spiritual or other proclitivities, one is profoundly moved by the extraordinary man at the centre of the story. Sri Ramakrishna is neither an *avatar* nor a miracle

man here. He is represented as a human being of extraordinary sensibility, a *rasa-hridaya*, a person of gentleness, grace and humility, and of such love and compassion for his fellowmen that he appears to be an epitome of the Hindu culture and a vindication of the Hindu way of life in an age when that culture and that way of life were in imminent danger of being discarded for ever, one as a myth and the other as a susperstition. By his *versatility* Sri Ramakrishna established the validity of the Bhakti, the Jnana and the Tantric ways of spiritual realization; as also the Islamic and the Christian ways of *sadhana*. The unity amidst diversity of religion as such and its relevance for the brotherhood of man constitute the message of Sri Ramakrishna to our age of science and technology.

R.S. Sudarshanam

1961 Award

Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao

Andhra Vaggeyakar Charitramu

Visalandra Publishers, Vijayawada; 1958; 530 pp.; Rs. 6.00

> "Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao (b. 1920) is a distinguished biographer and author. *Andhra Vaggeyakar Charitramu* is a volume containing biographical sketches of about two hundred lyric writers and song composers in Telugu with critical evaluation of their contribution to Telugu song-literature as well as to Karnatak music. It is a valuable contribution to the literature and history of music in India."

Andhra Vaggeyakar Charitramu (A History of Andhra Composer-Singers) is the first attempt ever made in Telugu to present analytically and systematically the chronological history of Telugu composer-singers and their contribution to the musical tradition of South India.

After an initial chapter on the contribution of Andhra composers to early Indian musical lore, Rajani defines the words *vaggeya* and

prabandha and analyses their relationship to *geeta* and *keertana*. He finally enunciates the characteristics of a *Vaggeya-kara* on the basis of critical works written by Saranga Deva and Govinda Deekshita. While tracing the early history of *Vaggeya*, Rajani respectfully speaks of the contribution of non-Telugu composers like Jayadeva and Leelasuka to the genre, thereby establishing a close link between the overall Indian tradition and the particular tradition of the Andhras.

Rao's painstaking work is both exhaustive and scholarly. His extensive discussion of the contributions made by major *vaggeyakaras* such as the Tallapaka poets, Tyagaraja, Kshetrayya, Annamacharya, Kancharla Gopanna and others–covering a period of over five hundred years–takes particular note of the literary and musical excellence of these great composers, thus commendably combining in himself the roles of a literary critic and a musicologist.

Rao's inclusion, in his discussion, of the writings of the Yakshagana poets, the Harikatha narrator-poets and the poet-singers of folk mystical poetry *(kalagnana tatva kavlulu)* adds to the comprehensive outlook of the book.

Rajani's fine sense of history, his assessment of the relative merits of the composers-singers, and, finally his accurate placement of these masters in the musicial tradition of the country make the book a dependable reference guide to Telugu musicology.

M.N. Sarma

1962 Award

Viswanadha Satyanarayna

Viswanadha Madhyakkaralu

V.S.N. and Company, Vijayawada; 1960; 216 pp.; Rs. 10.00

"Viswanadha Satyanarayna (b. 1895) is a distinguished Telugu poet and author. His published works number more than sixty and include poems, ballads, novels, short stories, plays, and critical essays. His versatility and his poetic genius have won him high distinction. The award book, *Viswanadha Madhyakkaralu*, consists of ten 'satakas' in *madhyakkar* metre addressed to the ten manifestations of the Supreme Creator."

Viswanadha Madhyakkaralu offers a collection of devotional poems addressed to ten deities installed and worshipped at ten different shrines. It contains Srigiri, Sri Kalahasti, Bhadragiri, Kulaswami, Seshadri, Draksharama, Nandamuru, Nekarukal, Munnangi and Vemulavada *satakas*.

Sataka is a literary form cultivated and perfected by Telugu poets. It consists of one hundred stanzas and each stanza has four lines. The last line is devoted to 'makuta' or address and the other three lines express the poet's outpourings or *obiter dicta* on a variety of topics. Viswanadha Satyanarayana has made a masterly use of the *sataka* form to express his deep spirit of devotion to God in its various Hindu incarnations.

The form of these *satakas* deserves special mention and due recognition. *Madhyakkara* is a four-line stanza and the caption is derived from this stanzaic pattern. It is a difficult and rare metre and even the classical poets did not employ it for a full-length poem. Viswanadha Satyanarayna has executed more than a thousand verses in this difficult metre.

Besides the metre, the spirit of devotion runs like a unifying thread which knits together the diverse stanzas reflecting a rich variety of mood and feeling. The poet sometimes adopts an informal and intimate tone. At times he feels overwhelmed by this awe-inspiring attitude and remoteness. The attitude of utter humility and self-surrender lends charm to some verses. But the key-note is a supplication to the Almighty to shower His compassionate blessings and abounding grace.

The poet stresses his own unworthiness in relation to God but is optimistic of the future of mankind as long as God's mercy and grace are there.

These poems with their genuine devotional feelings reflect the deep longing felt by several hearts for communion and union with the divine. The pangs of separation, the yearning for union and the rapture of spiritual realisation find memorable expression in some of these stanzas. The accredited mastery of the poet is revealed in the happy blending of matter and manner, hope and despair, awareness and aspiration, conversational ease and conventional dignity.

C.N. Sastry 'Amarendra'

1963 Award

Tripuraneni Gopichand

Panditha Parameshwara Sasthry Veelunama

Navodaya Publishers, Vijayawada; 1964 (Second Edition); 300 pp; Rs. 6.00

The late Tripuraneni Gopichand (1910-1962) was distinguished author and novelist in Telugu whose brilliant career was cut off by his premature death in 1962. A sensitive and keen observer of life Sri Gopichand took to several careers, from politics to films, but stuck steadfastly to writing. In his later years, he was deeply seized with a quest for spiritual values which gave his writings a new edge.

The Award book *Panditha Parameshwara Sasthry Veelunama* is his last novel in which he has portrayed the reality of everyday life in all its variety and colour. The novel bears witness to the spiritual quest of the author in the turmoil and cross-currents of the present day."

This is one of the later novels of the late Tripuraneni Gopichand, who distinguished himself both as a novelist and a short story writer. The title bears a family resemblance to Bankimchandra Chatterji's *Krishna Kanter Veel Nama*.

The novel tells the story of a young idealist and his devoted wife, who go through many experiences and see many ups and downs, irritating and disturbing, ennobling and elevating by turns, till they are at peace with themselves and the world outside by dint of their own effort, aided by a happy turn of events.

The hero, Kesavamurti, a well-meaning writer of ability and imagination, has a circle of four friends, of doubtful reliability, who take undue advantage of him. He marries the adopted daughter of a wealthy and respected scholar, Pandit Parameswara Sasthry, against his wishes as it is an inter-caste marriage. The couple is happy and prosperous, but soon the machinations of one of Murti's friends creates problems resulting in the relationship cracking up. All of them proceed to the Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry in quest of peace.

After this, the hero, with his wife, decides to settle in a village, as a school-master, devoted to the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. Meanwhile, they are called to the bedside of dying Parameswara Sasthry. It is revealed that Sasthry has left a will making Murti the sole beneficiary of his estate and that Mrs Murti is his own daughter through his housekeeper and cook. The story ends happily with the reunion of mother and daughter.

In the technique of story-telling, *Veelu Nama* marks an advance in Gopichand's art of fiction. Here he adopts the autobiographical method and employs the device of flashback and diary to good effect. Glaring satire and a heavy dose of philosophy notwithstanding, the novel has a flow and remains readable and rewarding.

D. Anjaneyulu

1964 Award

G. Joshua

Kreestu Charitra

G. Joshua (the author), Guntur; 1963; 90 pp.; 3.50

"G. Joshua (b. 1895) is a distinguished Telugu poet and author. One of the most prolific poets of Andhra, Sri Joshua is particularly known for his simple and charming diction and spontaneity of expression. Besides four plays and three novels, he has ten volumes of poetry to his credit, one of which, *Khandakavyam*, runs into seven parts. His popularity with the common reader and listener has earned him a number of titles such as *Kavikokila*, *Kavidiggaj* and *Kavichakravarti*. He has been accorded ovations and public honour far and wide, not only in Andhra Pradesh but outside too, and has been nominated to the State Legislative Council by the Governor of Andhra Pradesh.

The Award book, *Kreestu Charitra*, is the life story of Jesus Christ retold in verse. For its powerful rendering of a noble theme and its lucid and charming versification, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Telugu literature."

Kreestu Charitra is the life story of Jesus Christ retold in verse. Though the author always used traditional stanzaic patterns, he offered new wine in old bottles. He was able to articulate the urges and aspirations of the modern times with remarkable insight, sympathy, sincerity and clarity.

Though he was a Christian, he was fully aware of the unity of all religions. With that breath of vision he portrayed Jesus as a prince of peace, a lord of love, as ministering angel of compassion and as a symbol of humanity and supreme self-sacrifice. The human aspects of Jesus's great endurance and spirit of humility attracted the poet.

The story of the Lord's birth, his sermons, his healing touch and his forgiveness are movingly delineated in the course of the narrative.

The crucifixion marks the climax of the story. Joshua lavished all his poetic powers upon this memorable event of supreme self-sacrifice and matchless forgiveness.

Though Joshua refers to the several miracles of Jesus, his main concern is to depict Jesus as an ideal human being with many loving and lovable traits. His love for the lowliest and the lost is brought out with great force in many stanzas. The humanistic aspect of his teachings and the universality of his message are highlighted in the poem. The Lord bore the cross and the crown of thorns to scatter the fragrant roses of love on the path for others, according to the poet. Jesus in Joshua's poem stands out as a great benefactor of mankind. Through his sacrifice and suffering, Jesus regained for mankind the paradise that had been lost by Adam and Eve. In this poem Joshua affirmed that God's love is omnipresent and that a pure and kind heart is the best temple of God with selfless service to fellowmen as the highest worship. He invokes the spirit of Jesus to walk upon the earth once more to sanctify the soil and chase away the gathering gloom of evil and hatred.

The poem is a glowing tribute to one whose glory never departs from this earth. It is an impassioned narrative of the emergence, unfoldment and culmination of a noble and exemplary life which is peerless in the history of the world.

C.N. Sastry 'Amarendra'

1965 Award

Rayaprolu Subbarao

Misramanjari

Acharya Rayaprolu Subbarao (the author), Secunderabad; 1963; 169 pp.; Rs. 3.50

"Sri Rayaprolu Subbarao (b. 1892) is a distingusihed Telugu poet. Born in a village near Guntur in Andhra, Acharya Rayaprolu Subbarao had his early education in Sanskrit at home, and later at the Bapatla High School and the Nizam College, Hyderabad. He began his career at the Telugu Encyclopaedia Office at Madras. His first poem, which showed promise of a new lyrical trend, was published in 1909. The next six years saw the publication of four of his lyrical works. Their innate beauty, charm and idealism established his reputation as a major contemporary poet.

Early in 1915 he went to Santiniketan where he stayed two years cultivating his genius in an atmosphere rich with Tagore's inspiration. Many of Acharya Rayaprolu Subbarao's much admired patriotic poems were written at Santiniketan.

In 1922 he joined the Osmania University at Hyderabad as Assistant Professor and retired in 1949 as Head of the Telugu Department at the University, and Principal of the Warangal College. Later, at the invitation of Sri Venkateswara University, he went to Tirupati and served as Head of the Telugu Department till 1959.

The title of Kavi Bhooshana was conferred on him in 1924 by the Research University at Vijayanagaram and in 1938 the Trilinga Vidya Maha Pitha conferred on him the title of Sahitya Sthapaka. He has been associated with several literary institutions in Andhra. In 1963, he was elected a member of the General Council of Sahitya Akademi for his eminence in the field of letters. Hailed as one of the makers of modern Telugu poetry, Acharya Rayaprolu Subbarao has over 30 books in Telugu to his credit, including some translations. He has also

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written in English on Vemana, the saint poet of Andhra, and on the city of Warangal.

The award book, *Misramanjari*, is his latest collection of lyrical poems, written over a long period, and is hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Telugu literature."

Rayaprolu Subbarao, in his poetry, exalts the theme of love; holds the romantic view that love is the secret of all morality and that the smile of love kindles the universe. He regarded women as a sacred and uplifting influence on human life and eschewed the vulgar tradition of indulging in erotic descriptions of feminine beauty. The credit goes to him for elevating woman to a high pedestal and adoring the maternal aspect of womanhood.

Subbarao used his poetry as a clarion to arouse the spirit of patriotism and healthy nationalism. Love for the tradition and culture of Andhra never came into clash with love for Mother India and our immortal heritage. We find in his poetry echoes of the universal utterance of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. One of the pieces included in this miscellany offers a glowing tribute to poet Rabindranath's versatile genius.

We find in this volume several pieces which glorify the heroic figures of the past and the present who distinguished themselves in various walks of life. He pays tributes to inspiring poets like Potana, Tyagaraja, Kshetrayya, Chellapilla Venkata Sastry, educationists like C.R. Reddi, philosophers like Radhakrishnan and apostles of culture like Mutnuri Krishnarao who ably expounded the spirit of the Indian renaissance in all his writings.

Apart from Andhra festivals like Ugadi, Sankranti and Dasara, Lord Venkateswara and Lord Krishna provide the theme for his poems. Of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, we also find in his poetry echoes of the universal utterances. The inclusion of translations, some Persian poems, a poem of Iqbal, a song of Mira and an exquisite rendering of Gurudev's celebrated poem "Urvasi", reveal the poet's readiness to welcome anything beautiful from any corner of the world. He regards poetry as the confluence of Truth, Beauty and Love and holds that the Muse offers a unifying vision and boundless bliss to the devoted poet. For him poetry is a means to attain realisation and liberation.

The poet's mastery in handling traditional verse-patterns as well as new experiments which display the spirit of freshness and freedom

found in the folk melodies are remarkable. Subbarao strikes us as an innovator not only in content but also in form.

C.N. Sastry 'Amarendra'

1969 Award

Thummala Seetharamamurthy

Mahatma Katha

Thummala Seetharamamurthy (the author), Secunderabad.

"Thummala Seetharamamurthy (b. 1901) is a distinguished poet and patriot. Born at Kavur in Repalle Taluk of Guntur district, Sri Seetharamamurthy received his higher education at the Andhra University, Waltair, and was awarded the degree of Ubhaya Bhashapraveena in 1930. He has worked as a Telugu Pandit for the District Board High Schools at Guntur.

Sri Seetharamamurthy's creative work as a poet is distinguished by his patriotic fervour and his passionate devotion to the cause of his country's freedom. His long narrative poems reflect the agony and the dreams of people engaged in liberating themselves from foreign yoke and marching towards the path of equality and progress. Besides the volumes of original poems Sri Seetharamamurthy has also published several volumes of translation from various languages into Telugu. For his valuable work in the field of letters he has received a number of honours and distinctions, including the Fellowship of the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi and the Honorary Doctorate of the Andhra University.

The award book, *Mahatma Katha*, is a long narrative poem on the life of Mahatma Gandhi and highlights the Mahatma's activities during 1919-48. For its epic dimensions, the ease and charm of narrative and for its lofty tone and movement, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Telugu literature."

Thummala Seetharamamurthy is known for his crisp and unadorned style in Telugu modern poetry, and his works on the Andhra peasantry as well as the patriotic poems he wrote during the freedom movement earned him the name of 'Abhinava Tikkanna', after one of the great trio who first translated the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* into Telugu verse. By translating Gandhiji's autobiography the poet further justified his claim to be treated in line with the grand old Tikkanna, an immortal of Telugu literature. The poet's translation is faithful to the original, and hence its form is determined by the original. Gandhiji's life was an epic by any standard and the sublimity of the subject has impressed itself upon the Telugu epic, while the simple grace of the Telugu poet's style is in full consonance with Gandhiji's physical appearance and life-style when he led the Indian people for a full quarter of a century.

This work has been acclaimed as a remarkable achievement by scholars and discerning critics.

R.S. Sudarshanam

1970 Award

D. Balagangadhar Tilak

Amrutham Kurisina Rathri

Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada; 1968; 150 pp.; Rs. 4.00

"The late D. Balagangadhar Tilak (1921-1966) was a distinguished poet and playwright in Telugu. Born in a well-to-do family of Tanuku in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, Sri Balagangadhar Tilak took to poetry at a very early age and had published his first book of poems by the time he was 21. An idealist and a firm believer in social change, Sri Tilak did not find the closed atmosphere of institutionalised education congenial to his literary pursuits and abruptly discontinued his college education to devote himself wholly to his intellectual and creative work. The shock and sorrow caused by the death of his dearly beloved father supplied the nervous stimulus and led his sensitive mind to explore new forms of expression in creative writing. Without alienating himself from the classical tradition Sri Tilak brought a

freshness and a new sensibility in all his writings which include short stories and plays besides poetry. His experiment in the use of free verse in poetic compositions made him one of the pioneers of the new Telugu poetry to which he has made a lasting contribution.

The Award book, *Amruthan Kurisina Rathri*, which literally means 'The night it rained nectar', is a collection of sixty-four poems. For its sensitive portrayal of human emotions, its wide humanity and its boldness in expression the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Telugu literature."

Amruthan Kurisina Rathri is a collection of sixty-odd poems, marked by brevity and variety. The length varies from half-a-page to four pages each. The themes range from poetry and freedom, *kathopanishad* and cosmopolitanism to the letter of a soldier in the battle field and the postman on his daily rounds for delivering the mail.

In his 'poetic manifesto', he makes it clear that his poetry is neither 'philosophy' nor 'psychology', neither 'capitalism' nor 'communism' nor any 'confusionism either'. It is his door to the perception of beauty. To which he adds:

My words are doves of compassion,
drenched in human tears
My words are victorious elephants,
carrying the might of common man
My words are charming belles,
sporting in the moonlight.

Like Krishna Sastri, the highpriest of the Romantics, Tilak is an impenitent votary of the concept of beauty. His words are evocative, his imagery is rich. Like 'Sri Sri', the flaming leader of the revolutionaries, he is a fiery protagonist of the cause of the people—the denied and the dispossessed. But strident slogans and raucous partisan rhetoric are not for him. He is not a propagandist; he is a poet first and last, who is heir to the glorious heritage of Kalidasa and Peddana, Keats and Auden. But his poetry is no echo; it is a voice-fluent, mellifluous, unmistakable. It can be heard, at its best, in this collection.

D. Anjaneyulu

1971 Award

Thapi Dharma Rao

Vijayavilasamu:Hridayollasa Vyakhya

Vasishta Rachanalu, Hyderabad; 1968; 667 pp.; Rs. 20.00

"Thapi Dharma Rao (b. 1887) is a distinguished author, journalist and critic in Telugu. Born at Berhampur (Dist. Ganjam), Sri Dharma Rao was educated at Srikakulam and Madras University. He worked for some time as a survey officer and a teacher. Later he founded a series of publications to popularise standard works in Telugu. He edited the daily *Janavani* during 1936-39. He has written stories and dialogues for a large number of Telugu films. His published works include poetry, novel and essays besides works of scholarship and literary criticism. He has been a member of the Royal Asiatic Society and the Founder-President of the Andhra Progressive Writers Association.

The Award book, *Vijayavilasamu:Hridayollasa Vyakhya* is a commentary on the well known poem of the 17th century. For its erudite scholarship, masterly exposition and critical appreciation the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Telugu literature.

Vijayavilasamu:Hridayollasa Vyakhya is a masterly commentary on a celebrated poem *Vijaya Vilasamu,* belonging to Prabandha type of poetry by Chemakura Venkata Kavi who lived during the period of the Naik kings of Tanjore in the 17th century.

The poem which is considered as one of the best in Telugu literature and which in almost every verse presents varying modes of stylistic ornaments and figures of speech, celebrates the romantic escapades of the Pandava hero Arjuna in his journey around the world which he had to undertake as a penance for having trespassed into the Chamber of Draupadi while she exclusively belonged to Yudhishtira. The poem deals with the romantic encounters of Arjuna with Uloopi, Chitrangada and Subhadra.

In this book, the commentator reproduces a verse in full from the poem, according to his text, explains textual variants, if any,

gives his meaning of each word of the verse, places before the reader the distinguishing quality of the verse, and pointing out to the rhetorical figure in it, comments on the manner of composing the verse. For example, while describing the beauty of the heroine Chitrangada, the poet has written a verse in which he says that had not the full moon been vanquished and insulted publicly some time ago, in a contest in which he faced and opposed the maiden with a beautiful forehead, he could have been compared with the smiling face of the maiden. But now he cannot be. In Indian poetry, a damsel's face is compared to the moon. The poet had used the phrase "reka movaka Yunnan" to which the other commentators gave a different meaning and lost sight of the suggestion implied, whereas, the present commentator, Dharma Rao gave the meaning as "receiving wound or get bruised". Because the moon received a wound, there is a scar on him, and because there is a scar, he cannot be compared with the spotless beauty of the damsel with a smiling face.

Thus it is a thoughtful and enlightening commentary and the author has aptly named it as 'Hridayollasa Vyakhya', meaning a delightful commentary.

D. Ramalingam

1972 Award

'Sri Sri'

Sri Sri Sahityamu

Sri Sri Shastripoorti Sanmana Sangam, Madras; Vol.I, 1970, 227 pp., Rs. 5.00; Vol.II, 572 pp., Rs. 5.00; Vol.III, 496 pp., Rs. 5.00

"Born at Visakhapatnam, Sri Srirangam Srinivasa Rao, popularly known as 'Sri Sri', graduated from the Madras University in Zoology, and then worked as a journalist for some time. A pioneer of modern trends in Telugu poetry and progressive in outlook, he is held in high esteem by contemporary Telugu writers. His collection of poems *Mahaprasthanam,* was the New Testament of the younger generation during 40s and 50s. 'Sri Sri.' has made a permanent mark in Telugu literature as a

poet and playwright. He has been the President of the Revolutionary Writers' Association, and was a member of the Legislative Council of the composite Madras state. He was also the President of the Andhra Progressive Writers Association. In 1966 he won the Soviet Land Nehru Award for his collection of poems *Khadga Srishti*. He has also written lyrics for many Telugu films.

The Award book, *Sri Sri Sahityamu*, is a collection in six volumes of his early and most recent poetry, plays, short stories, essays, letters and limericks. For its intensity of expression, freshness of outlook, vigorous diction and progressive ideas, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Telugu literature."

'Sri Sri' blazed a new trail with the publication of his calebrated poem *Mahaprasathanam* (The Great Journey) which sounded the clarion call for revolt against social inequality, economic exploitation and cultural obscurantism. Under the caption of *Mahaprasathanam* he published in 1950 some lyrics and free-verse which set a new trend and offered a new vision of an order based on equality, fraternity and good will. His verbal mastery and his bold experiments in technique earned him enormous popularity.

On the occasion of his sixtieth birthday three volumes of his works were published. They included his poems, lyrics, essays, reviews, sketches, playlets and features. 'Sri Sri' has become a byword for modernity because of his daring technical innovations and interesting metrical experiments. He tried to transplant surrealism and Dadaism in Telugu literature. He is hailed not only as a pioneer but also as a master of progressive writing because of his political zeal, poetical excellence and profound erudition.

His prose is as scintillating as his poetry though his essays, stories and plays do not conform to any traditional pattern. He is a literary giant who follows the bent of his own genius and adheres to the creative laws that spring from within rather than the critical canons that are imposed from without.

He continues to be a tremendous force to reckon with in modern Telugu literature though he shocks his admirers and detractors alike through his unpredicatable as well as disconcerting pronouncements. Like all gifted artistes and visionaries 'Sri Sri' transcends all regional and racial barriers.

He left his stamp of individuality on the structure as well as the texture of modern Telugu literature; he has already attained the commanding stature of a classic among the poets of the century. He is endowed with sparkling wit and a rare gift of humour which add a punch to every sentence that flows from his pen. We find in him an unusual combination of the prophet and the jester which enhances the charm of his personality.

C.N. Sastry 'Amarendra'

1973 Award

C. Narayana Reddy

Mantalu Manavudu

Andhra Pradesh Book Distributors, Secunderabad; 1970; 70 pp.; Rs. 2.50

"C. Narayana Reddy (b. 1931) was born in the district of Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh, received his degrees of M.A. and Ph. D. in Telugu Literature from the Osmania University, and then joined its Department of Telugu as a lecturer. At present he is working there as a Reader. He has so far published over twenty books of poems and plays besides his doctoral thesis, and has won several literary awards. He is a member of the General Council of the Sahitya Akademi.

The Award book, *Mantalu Manavudu*, is a collection of thirty poems first published in 1970. For its deft use of free verse and its rythmic charm, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Telugu literature."

This book *Mantalu Manavudu* is a bunch of stray poems in free verse. The title of the present volume means 'Flames and the Man' which has a philosophy underlying it. Ever since the creation, the poet observes, man has been living amidst blazing flames which are symbols for sufferings, troubles and oppressions. But man co-existing with them ceaselessly marches ahead and achieves greater things.

The poet proceeds further and says that man himself is a burning flame. One may extinguish the fires around one, but the fires raging in the man's inner self can never be cooled.

Other poems in this collection reflect the poet's social awareness. His studies of individual inadequacies and contemporary trends in society have produced very interesting pieces. He decries obscurantism which, in his view, is nothing but poverty of ideas. He reiterates his strong belief in the new order. The poet is essentially an idealist. There is didacticism, some proposals, bold pronouncements and also a sounding of warning signals. But since the poet is an ardent votary of the saying that "poetry is musical speech", he is able to impart poetical sense to a matter of fact. There is subtle satire and biting sarcasm as in the case of the poem about the fight of two bullocks which is a political cartoon drawn in select words which are striking for their rhythm as well as meaning. The taste he exhibits in his choice of words and the meaning he is able to derive from them is appreciated by the discerning lovers of poetry because the epithetic meaning is always predominant in his poems. His similes, alliterations and suggestions are delightful. Possessing a mastery over the resources of language and being well aware of the essential adjuncts of poetry, he achieves not only beauty and melody but a scintillating sense in all his poetry. For him poetry is an art for aesthetic presentation of profound thoughts, and for the socially conscious outpouring of facts of contemporary life.

D. Ramalingam

1974 Award

Dasarathi

Thimiram Tho Samaram

Mahandhra Prachurabu, Hyderabad; 120 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"Sri Dasarathi, distinguished Telugu poet, was born in 1927, participated in freedom struggle and was imprisoned in 1947

and was awarded Tamrapatra in 1972. He is the Founder-President of the Telangana Writers' Association (1952) and has won the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi Award in 1968. He has translated Ghalib's ghazals in Telugu and written 500 lyrics for films. Besides ten volumes of poetry, he has written plays and done a good deal of broad-casting."

Thimiram Tho Samaram is a collection of forty-seven poems. The title, symbolically means 'War on Darkness'. Darkness here stands for superstition, irrationality, injustice, reaction, obscurantism, unrighteousness and other vicious trends in the present-day world which are poised to do incalculable harm to humanity. The poet is the soldier in this war against darkness and his pen is his gun. His battle against darkness is relentless; his very first book of poems *Agni Dhara* is acclaimed as the "poem of a battle" by the critics.

The poet, through the poems in this volume, touches contemporary events and problems both at home and abroad, such as separatist movements in Andhra, the Vietnam War, liberation of Bangladesh, of nuclear proliferation, violence, world peace, etc. The poet sings with gusto of the saga of sacrifical struggle against political oppression, and social and economic injustice as well as the heroic efforts to uphold human dignity, truth and higher values of life. The voice of the suppressed and the downtrodden and also the voice of saner elements against the prevailing state of brinkmanship echo in these poems. The poet is a strong optimist and his immense faith in the bright future that awaits mankind finds eloquent and powerful expression in one of the poems. He dreams of a socialistic society, which is free from terrible weapons, where the deity of peace smiles and the kindly light is all-pervading. The poem "Chiranjeevi Nehru" is a brilliant portrayal of the imposing stature of one of the world's greatest freedom fighters. There are other poems such as "Koham", "Nadi", "Viswa Manava Vijaya Geetika", etc. which are rich in magic of words, flights of imagination and novel usages by way of experimentation which establish Dasarathi, a progressive poet commanding the appreciation of traditionalists and lovers of romantic poetry as well as of experimentalists. The following statement of his, on life and letters is the cornerstone of this volume:

The life that wages a fierce war on Darkness
Is an immortal one;
The dazzling circle of poetry
Is the abode of world peace.

D. Ramalingam

1975 Award

Boyi Bhimanna

Gudiselu Kalipotunnai

Sukhela Niketan, Hyderabad; 1973; 140 pp.; Rs. 7.50

"Sri Boyi Bhimannai, distinguished Telugu poet and playwright, was born in 1911 in Mamidikuduru, a village in Andhra Pradesh. He got his degree in Arts from the P.R. College, Kakinada, and later earned a degree in Education too. From 1936 to 1955 he worked variously as a journalist, a Harijan-worker, and Publicity Officer to the State Government. He has been felicitated a number of times by various literary institutions. The Andhra University conferred on him an honorary doctorate in 1971. He was elected a Fellow of the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi and the same year he received the 'Padmashri'. He is also a member of the Telugu Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi.

Gudiselu Kalipotunnai is considered an outstanding contribution to Telugu literature for its deep sympathy towards the downtrodden, its insistence on human rights, and robust optimism."

This present volume of free-verse *Gudiselu Kalipotunnai* contains fifty-seven pieces, divided into four sections: 'Oh, the Buffaloes!' 'Poor People', 'The No-Changer' and 'Tumris'.

These free-verse pieces display an impressive variety of theme and content, flights of fancy and imagination. The diversity of topics has an underlying unity provided by the poet's deep concern for the lot of the common man. The spirit of revolt against the *status*

quo is articulated in the first section. In the other sections the poet portrays the pitiable plight of the downtrodden sections of our society. He decries the superstitions, institutionalised religion and rituals. But he declares his faith in a providence, a destiny which shapes our ends. He believes in God rather than man-made laws and institutions which create division and disharmony in human life.

Though he advocates free-verse, the poet is fully aware of the aesthetic quality of poetry which alone can set the seal of art on reformistic and progressive theories.

All through the fifty seven pieces, we find a note of urgency and anxiety to better the lot of the neglected sections of society. Behind the tone of frivolity we find deep sincerity of purpose. Though the poet often adopts the strategy of a jester his laughter trembles with tears behind it. His wit and wisdom, his satire and sarcasm have the single aim of disseminating sweetness and light among the denizens of the benighted huts.

He makes a fervent appeal to the people to wake up, to open their eyes and realise their potential power. The free-verse employed in these pieces achieves simplicity, directness and force by making use of diction which approximates to the spoken word.

Though the poet seems to be a bundle of odd contradictions, these contradictions find an intrinsic principle of passion and compassion which resolves them. The poet's humanistic ideal to spread the spirit of brotherhood and equality, to accelerate the pace of social change and to make this world a better place to live in, has compelled him to wield his gifted pen as a powerful weapon. A refreshing note of optimism rings through his works promising a better deal for all those who groan under the burden of various struggles and problems.

C.N. Sastry 'Amarendra'

1977 Award

Kundurti Anjaneyulu

Kundurti Kritulu

Kundurti Sanmana Sangam, Guntur; 1975; 948 pp.; Rs.40.00

"Sri Kundurti Anjaneyulu, distinguished Telugu poet, was born at Kotavaripalem, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh in 1922. Obtaining his B.A. degree in Economics from Andhra Christian College, Guntur, in 1940, he worked with the local Tobacco Market Committee before joining the State Department of Information and Public Relations in 1956 where he is now the Editor of the Telugu monthly journal *Andhra Pradesh*. He began by writing romantic poetry in 1940 but his joining the Progressive Writers' Movement led by the renowned Telugu poet 'Sri Sri' revolutionised his approach to poetry and literature. Sri Anjaneyulu is a pioneer figure in the Free Verse movement in Telugu. He has a number of volumes of poetry to his credit. He was given the Soviet Land Nehru Award jointly for his collections *Nagaramlo Vaana* and *Naaloni Naadaalu* in 1969 and the former won him the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi Award in 1970. He is also a literary critic and his introductions to the collections of other poets have been published under the title *Kundurti Peethikalu*.

Kundurti Kritulu is considered an outstanding contribution to Telugu literature for its involvement with the common man, bold and successful experimentation with free verse, and clarity and directness of diction."

The entire poetical output of Kundurti, one of the Niagara group of poets and a leader of the free verse movement in Telugu has been collected in this omnibus volume, which represents his complete works written during the period 1940-1945. It comprises, among other writings, poems of Kundurti from *Niagara*, a tiny anthology of Telugu poetry, "Telangana", a full-length poem depicting the agrarian armed struggle in Telangana which was a part of the old feudal state of Hyderabad, "Yuge Yuge", "Nagaramlo Vaana" (Rain in the City), "Naaloni Naadaalu" (The Ringings in Me), "Idee na Desam" (This is My Country) "Sahasa Yatra" (An Adventurous Journey), "Bhagavantuniki Bahiranga Lekha" (An Open Letter to

God), "Anuvada Mala", Kundurti's translations of the poetry of other Indian languages, and "Dandi Yatra" (Dandi March), a long narrative poem depicting Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March to defy salt laws of the British Government which led to the Civil Disobedience Movement during the freedom struggle of India. A verse play entitled "Siksha Emiti" (What is the Punishment?) is also included in this collection.

Kundurti, who was a Marxist, strongly pleaded for a total change in the socio-economic set up of the country and hence his themes pertain to dynamic people's movements and revolts against the prevailing oppressive system. He believed that literature was unworthy of its name if it did not serve a definite social purpose, especially in bringing about social awareness.

Kundurti, who was instrumental in popularising the form of free verse in the Telugu literary field and who established a Free Verse Front for the purpose, made many experiments with free verse. He endeavoured to make his poetry conform to the speech of the common man, avoiding the artifices of an embellished language. Utter simplicity and genuine naivity are the hallmarks of his poetry. He was against sensationalism, obscurity and ambiguity in poetry and cared more for a good diction and proper rhythm so that modern poetry may even attract the classicists and traditionists. He was for achieving perfection of the form of free verse, and this is amply revealed in the several pieces of this voluminous collection.

D. Ramalingam

1978 Award

D.V. Krishna Sastri

Collected Works of Krishna Sastri Vol. I to VI

Vol.I Meghamala (Film songs), 176 pp., Rs. 9.00; Vol.II Dhanurdas (Plays), 95 pp., Rs. 9.00; Vol.III Pallakee (Poems), 99 pp., Rs. 8.00; Vol. IV Sarnishta (Plays), 186 pp., Rs. 8.00; Vol.V Andalu Thirpav (Keerthanas), 148 pp., Rs. 8.00; Vol.VI Krishnaprak Sharma (Lyrics), 150 pp., Rs. 8.00.

"Sri D.V. Krishna Sastri, distinguished Telugu poet, was born at Pithapuram, East Godawari district, Andhra Pradesh, in

1897 in a family of well known scholars. He obtained his B.A. from the University of Madras in 1918 and served as a teacher in high schools for four years. *Kanneeru*,a small volume of his devotional lyrics, was published in 1922. The publication of his *Krishnapaksham* in 1925 marks a new epoch in Telugu poetry. He served as a lecturer in Telugu in Kakinada for six years and before his laryngotomy in 1964, he was the Producer, Spoken World, and Literary Adviser to All India Radio, Hyderabad for several years. Sri Sastri has a number of volumes of poetry and prose to his credit and has been honoured by various literary and cultural institutions. The University of Andhra has conferred its honorary doctorate 'Kalaprapoorna' on him and he was also awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1975.

Collected Works of Krishna Sastri Vol. I to VI, are considered an outstanding contribution to Telugu literature for their remarkable variety of form, intense lyrical quality, extraordinary felicity of expression and unflinching faith in human values."

D.V. Krishna Sastri became one of the leading figures in the Romantic School of poetry. His collection of poems and lyrics *Krishna Paksham* was published in 1925 and broke new ground in Telugu poetry with its tenderness of sentiment, delicate diction, vague sweetness and emotional appeal. He combined in his work the ethereal quality of Shelley, the pantheism of Wordworth, the felicitous phrasing of Keats and the pictorial element of the Pre-Raphelites.

From intense subjectivity, the poet evolved a cosmic vision inspired by the ardent spirit of devotion to God, as the embodiment of love and compassion. His devotional lyrics have a universal appeal because his vision embraces all creation and rises above all the petty boundaries of ritual, creed or race. His poems abound in humanism, individualism and love of freedom. His gospel of love unites the worm beneath the sod with the most exalted spirit of God.

Besides *Krishna Paksham, Urvasi* and *Pravasam* were published in 1929. There was a lull for many years. Occasionally he contributed to the All India Radio musical plays like "Sarmishtha," "Krishanashtami", "Guha","Venukujam", operas like "Viprenarayana", features like "Kotta Kovela" (The New Temple) and "Round the Year".

As a lyricist Krishna Sastry is peerless. Selecting a few simple words he conjures up pictures of rare felicity and beauty. Having

an amazing variety of theme his songs run through the entire gamut of human emotions.

Krishna Sastry is remembered for his extensive tours in Andhra, popularising the new trend of poetry ushered in by his inspired compeers. His style of head-dress, dress and address became symbolic of *Bhavakavitwam* (Romantic poetry). His mellifluous oratory is remembered with a touch of nostalgia as his vocal chords were removed and he was rendered mute in his sixties.

Despite the disability, Krishna Sastry's Muse remained articulate to the very end. In 1950, he made his mark as a film lyricist. He retained freshness of feeling lyrical tenderness and sweetness of simple diction, without padering to the vulgar taste.

Krishna Sastry's prose is marked by the same lyrical fervour, vigour of imagination and flawless choice of the apt word. Some of his reflective essays, "Maluputirigite" (If We Take a Turn), "Bahukala Darshanam"(Meeting After a Long Time), reveal his mastery of the medium of prose which is simple, sweet and memorable.

Krishna Sastry endeared himself to generations of readers as a poet and writer as well as a man whose heart is "full of the milk of human kindness".

C.N. Sastry 'Amarendra'

URDU

1956 Award

S. Abid Hussain

Qaumi Tehzib Ka Masala

Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu, Aligarh; 1955; xii+335 pp.; Rs. 6.0.0

The book under review can be called one of the monumental books on the problem of India's national culture. The problem is complicated because India's culture is a fusion of diverse cultures which present themselves in their isolated forms and hence create a lot of confusion. Therefore, it is necessary that not only the original forms of different cultures but also their evolution through different ages be studied carefully and perseveringly and then it should be noted to what extent these have influenced the other co-existing cultures and have been influenced by them and, finally, it has to be seen what picture of the national culture emerges from the fusion and isolation of these cultures.

Abid Hussain has performed this laborious task very successfully. Starting from the pre-Vedic times he has traced the interaction and mutual assimilations of various cultures—obviously based on the thoughts of the propounders of various religions. Later, he has also taken into account the contribution of the various masters of art, litterateurs, musicians, architects, etc.

The book deals with the evolution of the fusion of cultures up to the post-Independence period. One may have a little difference of opinion with the author here and there but one has to admit that the subject has been throughout dealt with dispassionately and objectively and no essential factor has been left out. The lucid style, coupled with the force of conviction, has given the book a readability which is rather rare in the books dealing with such heavy subjects.

Saraswati Saran 'Kaif'

reactions of people especially Mir in such context and background. Through the literary symbols employed by Mir, Faruqi has recorded the whisperings of the people, their ideas and opinions, and in this way has provided life to the dead bones of history.

Mir Taqi Mir assumes a new dimension in literary historical writings though it is not a formal piece of history. It is a modern classic. It provides a fresh perspective for the study of the 'good of poesy' and also a new insight into the history of Urdu literature. By all standards it is a contribution to our corpus of literary criticism in Urdu.

Zaheer Ahmad Siddiqi

1958 Award

'Jigar Moradabadi' (Ali Sikandar)

Atish-i-Gul

Hind Book Depot, Delhi; 260 pp.

> "Sri Ali Sikandar 'Jigar Moradabadi' (b. 1890 in Moradabad, U.P.) is a distinguished poet who has given new depth and meaning to the traditional 'Ghazal' form."

Atish-i-Gul represents the acme of Jigar Moradabadi's creative sensibility, for in its ghazals he has distilled his aesthetics of love. Taking love out of the morass of despondency and dejection common in the traditional ghazal, he has imparted a glow of realism and sensitivity to it and treated it as an ennobling experience by using its aches and anguish as catalysts for self-realisation through a better and healthier understanding of the aspiration and limitations of human psyche. He has rescued the 'beloved' of the traditional ghazal from the stigma of a stony indifference and imbued her with the throbs of a responding heart. He conveys the intensity and ecstasy of various vicissitudes of amorous persiflage through the rhythmic cadence of his ghazals with the dexterity and sophistry of a maestro. His fecundity of experience and felicity of expression make the ghazals in this volume a thrilling blend of thought and emotion artistically realised.

Though essentially a poet of beauty and love, Jigar does not confine himself to these alone. His poetic ambit also includes various facets of the grandeur and sublimity of human existence. His love-credo assists him in projecting the agony of Man through his own tortured consciousness, for he knows the knack of elevating the personal experience to the universal and viewing the macro through the micro.

Unlike romantic poets, Jigar is not an escapist. His imaginative antenna is attuned to various wavelength of the milieu. Quite often his poems express his distress against communal paranoia and economic exploitation and advocate sincerity of purpose, broad-mindedness and dedication and devotion to the saner values of life for ensuring peace and happiness for humanity, though he takes care never to mount the pulpit and his message emanates as does fragrance from a flower.

Azad Gulati

1959 Award

Syed Masud Hasan Rizvi

Urdu Drama aur Stage

Syed Masud Hasan Rizvi, Kitab Nagar, Lucknow; 1957; 246 pp.

> "Syed Masud Hasan Rizvi (b. 1893 in Bahraich, U.P.) is a distinguished scholar and a literary critic who has authored twenty books."

Urdu Drama aur Stage is a book in two parts. The first part, 'Lakhnaoo Kaa Shaahee Stage' is devoted to detailed information about the 'rahas' as it was rendered in the royal palace of Lucknow under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah. It also gives its evolution in the verse play of Indar Sabhaa which is considered the first play of Urdu. This part also removes many misunderstandings about Wajid Ali Shah. It also gives the text of a play written by Wajid Ali Shah and which the author considers the first play of Urdu.

The second part of the book, 'Lakhnaoo Kaa Awaamee Stage' is devoted to the evolution of Urdu drama as it took place outside the royal palace. It gives a lot of details about dresses, stage management, etc. of various Indar Sabhaas staged in Lucknow in the mid-nineteenth century.

The whole book is very well documented, as is natural for a work by a scholar of Rizvi's stature. Despite the plethora of information it contains, the whole book is written in a lucid style. Several photographs, including two of Wajid Ali Shah, and a glossary of Avadhi words (with their meanings in Urdu) used in Indar Sabhaa in its 'holis', 'thumris', etc. are given in the book to make it a complete document.

Saraswati Saran 'Kaif'

1960 Award

Raghupati Sahai (Firaq Gorakhpuri)

Gul-i-Naghma

Idara-e-Anees-e-Urdu, Allahabad; 1959; 480 pp.; Rs. 6.50

> "Raghupati Sahai alias Firaq Gorakhpuri (b. 1896) is a leading poet of Urdu. *Gul-i-Naghma*, which literally means 'Flower of Song', is the latest collection of the poet's works and represents the creative achievement of a life-time. Here are put together those ghazals, nazms and rubaiyat of the poet which have won him wide popularity in Urdu literature and have influenced, not a little, the modern trends in Urdu poetry. A sensitive awareness of the contemporary uneasiness, along with the poet's use of bold imagery and vigorous diction make these poems a significant contribution to Urdu language and literature."

Some critics have placed Firaq in the category of progressive writers. Actually he belongs to no group and in every respect can be termed as an individualist *par excellence*. In an atmosphere resounding with Ghalib's praise Firaq revived Maumin and much improved on him. He has given temporal love (he does not believe in mystic love)

a finesse which renders it extremely charming. He has introduced many new topics--family relations, physical and mental beauty of ordinary women, love for children, etc. in Urdu poetry. According to his own assertion he was much impressed with Sanskrit literature. Despite his contributions to Urdu poetry it can be said with confidence that his source of inspiration did not give him much, for the simple reason that Firaq did not know Sanskrit--he could read even Hindi with difficulty. Actually Firaq has transferred more of English imagery to Urdu.

Gul-i-Naghma is the first volume of Firaq's collected works. But it contains all that is best in him. Particularly mentionable are his long poems on the history of man titled "Daastaan-e-Aadam", "Naghma-e-Haqeeqat", "Hindolaa" and selected pieces from his 'rubai' collection, *Roop*. His flow of language is terrific. He likes writing long poems, even his ghazals sometimes assume the proportion of *qaseeda*.

The book, as mentioned above, contains the best of Firaq who was almost the top Urdu poet of his time but who could have risen to still greater heights had he persisted in taking pains to study Sanskrit and Hindi poetry in depth.

Saraswati Saran 'Kaif'

1961 Award

Imtiaz Ali 'Arshi'

Diwan-i-Ghalib

Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu, Aligarh; 1958; 502 pp.; Rs. 20.00

> "Arshi (b. 1904) is a noted scholar of Urdu, Arabic and Persian. *Diwan-i-Ghalib* is a critical edition of Ghalib's poetry with a learned introduction, notes and commentary. Incorporating the latest research on Ghalib's life and work, this critical edition is a monument of scholarly research and sensitive literary appreciation."

Diwan-i-Ghalib edited and annotated by the eminent Urdu scholar, late Imtiaz Ali 'Arshi', is a delightful collection of Ghalib's poetry.

It contains a scholarly Foreword by Ale Ahmed Saroor, an erudite Urdu critic of our times, followed by a highly illuminating preface by 'Arshi' himself.

Ghalib, ever a legend, ranks the greatest of poets of all times and languages. It is a pity that the poet can be read and understood only in his original language. This inhibition however, does not diminish the universal appeal and impact of his poetry. Imtiaz Ali 'Arshi', who spent a number of years in that treasure house of rare books called Raza Library, Rampur, not only succeeded in putting together all the *Ghazaliaat, qutaars, masnavis* and *qsasida* of Ghalib but also arranged them in a chronological order. The latter is a very valuable feature of this monumental work.

This edition has been thoughtfully divided into three sections, viz. 'Ganjeena-e-Maani', containing all verses included in Hamidia and Sheerani editions; 'Nawa-e-Sarosh', comprising all verses as brought out and distributed by Ghalib himself in his life time, and 'Yaadgar Naala', consisting of those verses which though not included in any earlier edition were found written in the margins and at the end of the editions in Ghalib's own hand, and some other verses found in manuscript books of other poets, under the name of Ghalib. *Diwan-i-Ghalib* by 'Arshi' will continue to be rated as a work of outstanding merit. It indubitably constitutes a rich source of reference on Ghalib and can be regarded as indispensable for all lovers of Ghalib's poetry.

Meem Meem Rajinder

1962 Award

Akhtar-ul-Iman

Yaden

Rakhshinda Kitab Ghar, Bombay; 1961; 253 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"Akhtar-ul-Iman (b. 1915) is a distinguished Urdu poet. After an adventurous career in early life during which he wrote Urdu Ghazals in the traditional style, Sri Iman gradually turned to new experiments in poetic expression and has achieved distinction

active part in social and cultural activities of various organisations. He started writing poetry while still in his teens, first in English and then in Urdu. He soon made a name for himself as a poet of distinction in Urdu and has regularly participated in poetic symposia and *mushairas* all over northern India. He has three collections of poems to his credit.

The Award book, *Meri Hadis-e-Umr-e-Gurezan*, is his latest collection of poems which confirms his growing reputation as a major Urdu poet of the day. For its deep humanism and its polished diction and verse, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Urdu literature."

Meri Hadis-e-Umr-e-Gurezan is the third collection of Anand Narain Mulla's poems but it also contains selected poems from his two earlier collections *Joo-e-Sheer* and *Kuchh Zarre Kuchh Taare.*

Mulla has been throughout very serious about his profession and never gave too much time to poetry. His attitude has been much like Chakbast who was on very friendly terms with his family. Mulla's poetry too seems an advance on the poetry of Chakbast. He does not startle the reader or the audience like Ghalib or Yagana. Yet he has brought out in his poems certain psychological facts which are not strange to anyone yet which have not been brought out before him. Consider, for example, his famous poem, "Tum Mujhe Bhool Jaaoge" in which a dying beloved, most probably wife, tells the crying lover (or husband) that he would forget her and give her place to some other sweetheart. There is no reprimand and no resentment; just a sort of philosophical exposition in poetic terms. Yet an under-current of heart pangs is all too visible in every line. His other poems like "Qata-e-Muhabbat" or "Mariam-e-Saanee" show the same psychological deftness.

In ghazals Mulla uses more chaste language than many of his renowned contemporaries and the expression and subject-matter are always fresh. But he does not possess the miracle touch of emotion like Jigar or Firaq. Yet this seems a choice rather than a drawback. His ghazals give more food for thought and that is what he wanted.

The book is one of the finest collections of Urdu poetry.

Saraswati Saran 'Kaif'

1965 Award

Rajinder Singh Bedi

Ek Chadar Maili Si

Maktaba Jamia, New Delhi; 1962; 136 pp.; Rs. 2.25

"Rajinder Singh Bedi (b. 1915) is a distinguished author and playwright in Urdu. After a brief clerical career in the Postal Department, Sri Rajinder Singh Bedi joined the All India Radio, and was appointed Station Director of Jammu Radio Station in 1948. Soon after he resigned from Government service and ventured into the film world of Bombay as writer and producer. Notable among the films produced by him was *Garam Coat*. He also wrote the script for the two President Award winners, *Mirza Ghalib* and *Anuradha*.

Sri Rajinder Singh Bedi's maiden literary effort was in English poetry. He, however, soon switched over to Punjabi, and then to Urdu in which literary medium he achieved his full expression and mastery as a story-teller. His first collection of short stories entitled *Dana o Daam* was published in 1938. Three years later was published his second anthology of short stories, *Grehan*, which was hailed as a landmark in the history of Urdu short story. Sri Rajinder Singh Bedi has also written several plays, which were published in two volumes–*Bejan Cheezen* and *Saat Khel*. A vivid realism and vigour of narration mark his literary style.

The Award book, *Ek Chadar Maili Si*, is a short novel depicting the grim undercurrent of ruthless tragedy under the placid surface of rural life in India. For its powerful characterisation and innate humanity, the book has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Urdu literature."

Rajinder Singh Bedi's genial acceptance of human predicament singles him out as mystic realist who turns to weave another cobweb of relationship the moment the earlier one has ruinously been swept off. This is perhaps how the sequence of human stories remains unending. Their ephemeral contexts keep changing in every new situation but the context generating a continued existence is famil-

iarly the same. In *Ek Chadar Maili Si* also, the characters have no other choice but to live on. And for this, they cannot but choose the direction dictated by their plight and make the best of it. Be it Rano, Taloka, Mangal or Salamati, everyone is free only in his or her slavery. Widowed, Rano is made to get remarried to her brother-in-law, Mangal who is as a son to her and the 'son' is beaten to accept her as his wife. The situation becomes irresistably emphatic when Rano at last nods in willingness to marry her daughter to the killer of her former husband. Bedi is, it seems, blessing her with unpretentious sincerity and depth for her decision to live her present gloom happily.

Written in Urdu, the novel portrays the elemental Punjabi life, maintaining a perfect illusion of reality. It is the writer's firm grip over native idiom and folklore that makes his Urdu flow as the sixth river of the Punjab. The typically open and broad gesture and temperament of the characters bring sunshine into the dark happenings of the story, dispersing their snaky rows. And, even when tear-dimmed, Bedi would make the readers believe that the tears were for joy. Hazoor Singh, the grand old man in the novel, lives his creator at the end, looking fondly at the world and finding it, in spite of its miseries, too full of fun and life and affection to turn away from.

Bedi is a very sensitive craftsman and proudly talks of his belonging to the clan of artisans. No wonder, *Ek Chadar Maili Si* is a rare piece of art, even its casual shades making one think of the varied beauties of art.

Joginder Paul

1967 Award

Qurratulain Hyder

Patjhar Ki Awaz

Maktaba Jamia, New Delhi; 1965; 335 pp.; Rs. 5.25

"Qurratulain Hyder (b 1928) is a distinguished novelist and short story writer. Born at Aligarh in a family of writers,

> Miss Hyder received her degree of Master of Arts in English literature from the University of Lucknow in 1947. In the same year she wrote her first novel *Mere Bhi Sanamkhane* which received instant acclaim. Later she worked for some time with the *Daily Telegraph* of London and participated in a number of broadcasts from the Urdu section of the B.B.C. Widely travelled in Europe, the Far East, South East Asia and West Asia, Miss Hyder entered the front rank of Urdu writers by her novel *Aag Ka Darya*, a moving document on the tragic partition of the country which is remarkable for its pathos and nostalgia. Besides publishing several novels and collection of short stories in Urdu, Miss Hyder has also worked as a script-writer of documentary films and one of the documentaries scripted by her, *Malwa*, received the National Award in 1963. At present she is working as one of the editors of the English periodical *Imprint* published from Bombay.
>
> The Award book, *Patjhar Ki Awaz*, is the latest collection of her short stories published for the first time in book form. For its keen insight into the recesses of the human heart, for its frank portrayal of the contemporary reality and for the freshness of style and treatment, it has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to Urdu literature."

The collection *Patjhar Ki Awaz* contains eight stories: "Dalanwala", "Jalawatan", "Yad Ki Ik Dhanak Jale", "Qalander", "Carmen", "A Piece of Dialogue", "Patjhar Ki Awaz" and "Housing Society". The author calls "Housing Society" a novelette.

Qurratulain Hyder's world revolves round a well defined setting; Allahabad, Lucknow, Kanpur, Delhi, Bombay, Lahore, Karachi, a few other towns of India and Pakistan and a visit here and there to the continent–London in particular. A few years before and after the Partition of the country is the time-span covered in the stories.

Patjhar Ki Awaz is a book about the anguish of human beings, torn away from their roots and flung into raging storms. They are intensely alive. Some of them put up a brave fight and strive to preserve their individuality, others simply wither away or bow down to their destiny. Some keep on hoping against hopes. Some drift in simple biological continuity.

The mood, in all the stories is pensive and thoughtful but seldom deeply religious, political, psycho-analytical or metaphysical. *Patjhar Ki Awaz* is an expression of highly refined sensibility of a woman who is deeply concerned with the vicissitudes of human beings whose vulnerability to catastrophe has become acute through circumstances over which their control has gradually weakened.

Qurratulain Hyder is deeply human and full of warmth and affection and so are her best drawn characters. They suffer because the values they cherished are in a process of annihilation right before their eyes.

Patjhar Ki Awaz will go as a landmark in the history of Urdu short story. Qurratulain Hyder's relevance to Indian literature, of Urdu language in particular and other languages in general, is overwhelmingly significant.

Balraj Komal

1969 Award

Makhdoom Mohiuddin

Bisat-e-Raqs

Istaq Baliya Committee, Jashan Makhdum, Hyderabad; 1966; 231 pp.; Rs. 5.00

"The late Makhdoom Mohiuddin (1908-1969) was a distinguished poet and revolutionary. Born in a small village in the Medak district of what is now Andhra Pradesh (then Hyderabad State), Sri Makhdoom had his early schooling in Urdu and Telugu locally. Later he came to Hyderabad where he obtained his Master's Degree from Osmania University, maintaining himself by giving private tuitions. Early in life his imagination had been stirred by tales of the Russian Revolution and later his thought was moulded by the teachings of Marx and Lenin. Misrule and feudal oppression under the Nizam's regime added fuel to the passion for social justice and impelled him to organize the Comrade Association which later took shape as the Communist Party. Not averse to the

use of the gun, he had to lead an underground life for many years. He pioneered the Trade Union Movement in the former Hyderabad State, and organized the peasants and workers of Telengana to fight for their rights.

Sri Makhdoom began composing poems at a very young age. His poems are permeated by his concern for the lowly and the oppressed, and have been much admired by discerning literary critics.

The Award book, *Bisat-e-Raqs*, is a collection of Sri Makhdoom's poems written over a period of more than twenty years, ranging over a variety of themes. For its passionate crusade against injustice and for its sincerity and intensity of feeling, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Urdu literature."

Bisat-i-Raqs contains the best of Makhdoom Mohiuddin's verse. The poems included in his earlier collections *Surkh Savera* and *Gul-e-Tar* also form a part of *Bisat-e-Raqs*. This representative volume carries an introduction by Sibt-e-Hasan and a note by the poet himself.

Makhdoom is generally denominated as a progressive poet. But he is different from the so-called 'Movement' poets in that his refined sensibility is seldom subservient to his proclaimed political ends.

Makhdoom sings of love and life with as much ease as he mixes his eulogies of Stalin, Nehru, Iqbal, China and Moscow with songs of revolution. The dominant strain in Makhdoom's poetry, however, remains by and large lyrical in spite of his political protestations. He is at once earthly, evocative, warm-hearted, intensely humane and emotionally vibrant.

Makhdoom is cast in the classical mould with a flair for beauty and sensuousness. He handles both *nazm* and ghazal with equal felicity. His expression is generally concise and controlled. Even when he renders a rough hewn slogan into language of poetry, he never loses his grace and elegance. In fact, this is the quality which marks him apart from other poets of his generation.

Some of the well known poems included in *Bisat-e-Raqs* are "Intizar," "Andhera," "Charagar," "Chand Taron Ka Ban" and "Sannata". Makhdoom's ghazals are also deeply inspiring. *Bisat-e-Raqs* is a work of abiding literary merit.

Balraj Komal

1970 Award

Hayatullah Ansari

Lahoo Ke Phool

Kitab Daan, Lucknow; 1969 ; Vol.I to V, 2608 pp.; Rs. 70.00

"Hayatullah Ansari (b. 1911) is a distinguished novelist, short story writer and journalist in Urdu. Born in Lucknow in a family well known for its love of learning, young Hayatullah was brought up in an atmosphere of traditional Indo-Islamic culture. He received his higher education at Aligarh Muslim University where he acquired proficiency in Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Hindi. Carrying forward the family tradition of enlightened social progress, Sri Hayatullah took active interest in the national movement for freedom and became editor in 1937 of a Congress Urdu weekly *Hindustan*. In 1945 he was appointed editor of the Urdu daily *Quami Awaz* which he has continued to edit since. He was Secretary, Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, U.P. 1954-64; member of the Vidhan Parishad of U.P. 1952-66; and a member of the Rajya Sabha since 1966. Sri Hayatullah made his mark as a creative writer in Urdu with his two collections of short stories, *Bhare Bazar Men* (1947) and *Shikasta Kungooray* (1952)

The Award book, *Lahoo Ke Phool*, published in 1969, is Sri Ansari's first major work of fiction. It is indeed a monumental novel, running into five volumes and 2608 pages, and gives a graphic account of the changing pattern of life in Uttar Pradesh from 1911 upto 1952 portrayed through a large variety of situations and characters. For its wide sweep and mastery of detail, its vigorous prose style and powerful characterisation the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Urdu literature."

"It's history as fiction rather than its formal account", claims the author justifiably in the Introduction to this monumentally massive five-volume novel, that captures the breath and original colour of life. *Lahoo Ke Phool* seeks to tell the story of the recent Indian struggle for Independence, springing from an obscure country hole,

Bankatpura, and steadily growing to flood the *entire* subcontinent. Although he occasionally yields to the temptation of staying the story for passionate political discourses, yet he does manage to re-set his sails in the right direction.

Instead of taking up the major political figures as heroes and heroines, Ansari gainfully makes his choice for common men and women. Amarsingh, a diligent farmer, evokes an exquisite Gandhian note of hope and humility in sufferings. The arty swoops of the unforgettable Ramlal to lift plain, cooing women illustrate how perfectly Ansari can see through subtle characters. And the portrayal of Rahat gives the feeling that the writer is identifying himself with Rahat: a Muslim intellectual resiliently adhering to Gandhian values.

The sunset glory of the fallen Lucknavi nawabs is authentically laid, the set-up presenting these pathetic little royalties nostalgically fidgeting for a sleek make-up. Shaukat who belongs to the younger generation of such nawabs finds refuge at first in intriguing commercial hobjobs and later in politics. Not in sympathy with his political ideology, the author appears rather too threatened by his personal convictions to seat the man securely in his face. Another example where Ansari looks at an individual limitedly is the young communist, Maqsood. But, barring such solitary cases, the evidence of his capacity for de-limiting his characters creatively is abundant. Here is a whole multitude of people, diversely and discreetly chosen from contemporary scenes, all merging into a single Face, that of India, struggling for newer settlement. It is this phenomenal Face that gives the structural unity to scores of episodes in the novel.

Joginder Paul

1971 Award

Rasheed Ahmad Siddiqui

Ghalib ki Shakhsiyat aur Shairi

Delhi University, Delhi; 1970; 96 pp; Rs. 3.00

"Rasheed Ahmad Siddiqui (b. 1892) is a distinguished scholar, critic and essayist in Urdu. Born in a village in eastern Uttar

Pradesh, Prof. Siddiqui obtained his Master's degree from Aligarh Muslim University. He then joined the University as a lecturer from where he retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Urdu in 1958.

Revered by the Urdu literary world for his profound scholarship and inimitable prose style, he broke new grounds in the field of humorous essays and biographical sketches with his contributions. He has a number of published works to his credit. The President of India has conferred upon him the title of Padmashri.

The Award book, *Ghàlib ki Shakhsiyat aur Shairi,* is a critical study of the immortal Urdu poet. For its deep understanding and brilliant style, the work has been hailed as an outstanding contribution to contemporary Urdu literature."

Ghalib ki Shakhsiyat aur Shairi comprises two lectures delivered by the late Rasheed Ahmed Siddiqui, as a part of the Nizam Urdu lectures, in Delhi University in February 1968. The first lecture is on the personality of Ghalib and his environment and the second deals with his poetry.

Rasheed Ahmed Siddiqui was an Urdu scholar, critic, humorist and satirist of great calibre and was endowed with a highly lucid though erudite style. He was a competent authority in his own right to write on Ghalib, his times and his poetry. Though a lot has been written on Ghalib, the thirst of understanding this great poet more and more remains unquenched and a literary treatment of this quality as the book under review, is always a welcome addition.

The first lecture beautifully portrays Ghalib's person, his environs, the places where he lived and grew, his influence on other well statured and illustrious contemporaries and vice versa, the unique qualities of his head and heart and, of course, his melancholy and pensiveness. The account is captivating in every way and the reader has a fascinating glimpse into Ghalib's personality and times.

The second lecture provides a critical study of Ghalib's poetry in all its aspects. Every facet of Ghalib's immortal poetry has been dealt with incisively, though, of necessity, with brevity. This lecture will be found to be of tremendous value by students of Urdu literature and lovers of Ghalib, in assimilating the full meaning of Ghalib's verses and their nuances. A delightful book indeed.

Meem Meem Rajinder

1974 Award

Al-e-Ahmed Suroor

Nazar Aur Nazariya

Maktaba Jamia, New Delhi; 1973; 271 pp.; Rs. 10.50.

"Sri Al-e-Ahmed Suroor, distinguished Urdu critic, was born in 1912 and educated at Agra and Aligarh universities. He is B.Sc. and M.A. in English and Urdu literatures. He retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Urdu, Aligarh Muslim University, and is at present Visiting Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla. He was associated with the Convener of its Urdu Advisory Board for fifteen years. He has published six volumes of literary criticism and two volumes of poetry in Urdu, and has edited five books and the quarterly journal *Urdu Adab* for the last 24 years. He has travelled widely and lectured abroad.

Nazar Aur Nazariya is considered an outstanding contribution to Urdu literary criticism for its scholarship and perceptive literary quality."

Nazar Aur Nazariya is a collection of thirteen articles the author has written on various literary topics, some of which are out of the general trend of Urdu literary writing. For example, articles on "language of poetry" and "prose style" are deep probes into the very nature and expressive capabilities of the Urdu language. Similarly, the article on "problems of criticism" is a guide to literary critics. Other articles on "problems of translation and technical terms", "implication of modernity in literature" and "how and why of fiction" have been written in the context of Urdu language and literature but students of other languages too can learn much from these. The first article of the book on "personality in poetry" is a good psychological study, perhaps done for the first time in Urdu to this extent, though there is much scope for a still deeper probe.

Articles like those on "problem of literary expression and communication", "situation of literary criticism in Urdu", "implications of modernity and worship of modernity", "influence of Gorky on Urdu literature" and "influence of Lenin on Urdu literature" are of special interest to the students of literature.

There is also an article on G.B. Shaw which can be termed as one of the highest order and can be counted among the best comments on Shaw made all over the world.

Saraswati Saran 'Kaif'

1975 Award

Kaifi Azmi

Awara Sajde

Maktaba Jamia, Delhi; 1974; 88 pp.; Rs. 6.00

"Sri Kaifi Azmi, distinguished Urdu poet, was born in 1925. He belonged to a deeply religious family but turned out to be a rebel from his very youth. He abandoned his studies during the 1942 Movement for Indian freedom and identified himself with the progressive ideology. He has been actively associated with the progressive writers' movement in Urdu. He has so far published three collections of verse. He has visited a number of countries as a poet and is the recipient of the 1975 Soviet Land Nehru Award. He was also awarded the 'Padmashri' in 1973.

Awara Sajde is considered an outstanding contribution to Urdu literature for its vigorous expressiveness, breadth of vision and its unravelling of contemporary sensibility in all its rich variety."

Awara Sajde, the third collection of Kaifi's poems, marks a transformation in the tone and diction of the poet. The present collection, however, appearing after a lapse of 27 years, makes a sharp departure from the old pattern. Though the themes are mainly political, social and ideological, yet the poet has now mastered more symbolic techniques of expression, thus covering multifaceted reality of the contemporary period.

The fans of the powerful versified directness of Kaifi find poems like "Telangana," "Bangladesh," "Farghana", "Moscow" and "Husn". Kaifi's verse and vivacity are at their best in his poem on Telangana which ends in a militant note. But the dominating diction of the

collection is determined by poems like "Makan" and "Ibn-i-Maryam". The former symbolises teeming millions of India's nights. The poem also distinguishes itself by a keen sense of history. Kaifi spreads every single moment of human suffering through the span of history and connects it with the eternal saga of man's struggle for emancipation. In "Makan", for instance, man's quest for shelter has been traced from the days of the caveman down to feudalism and capitalism. This historicism adds a new dimension to his art and hence greater significance to his poetry, particularly in poems like "Ibn-i-Maryam", and "Zindagi". Invariably, these are not mere visions of history but a deep and sincere realisation that history can be and should be changed. Hence, the poems conclude with a call for action.

Perhaps, the most outstanding poem of this collection remains to be "Ibn-i-Maryam"–a poem on the statue of Jesus Christ erected in a smugglers' township of Bombay just facing the sea shore. The poet addresses the statue in a fit of anger and asks him why he stands for centuries staring where smugglers carry out their nefarious trade. Why should he not vacate the pedestal where the homeless may find there a place to sleep. Why should not Jesus go to the jungles of Vietnam which need Him most.

This march to human liberation or towards the elimination of human exploitation is not without its moments of trial. The present collection encompasses the various dimensions of the struggle, both at the national and international level as well as on the subjective and objective aspects.

Kaifi is deeply conscious of the problems posed to the revolutionary movement by the breaking up of the Communist monolith at the international level by the bickerings of China and the Soviet Union and the rift between the various Communist groups in India at the national level. These pose problems of immediate personal concern to Kaifi. These have been treated as a part of his personal poetic experience and given aesthetic expression through spontaneous use of socially significant symbols.

The lack of effective revolutionary movements in the country gave rise to communal and obscurantist tendencies to which Kaifi refers in his poems with great feeling. His poems, "Bahrupni", "Garabhwati" and "Pir-i-Tasma Pa" refer to the tragic rise of obscurantism. "Bahrupni" symbolises communalism which dons diverse masks and mislead mankind.

The lack of revolutionary fervour and the eclipse of social commitment has given birth to morbid subjectivity. All sorts of existentialist, metaphysical and idealist philosophies appeared. Kaifi's 'Adat' symbolises this morbidity. The commitment of Kaifi to the final triumph of man over all impediments is expressed forcefully in poems written after his severe attack of cerebral thrombosis. The last poem of the collection "Charaghan", symbolises every year of Indian Independence with an earthen lamp. It is this radiance of eternal hope that shines through Kaifi's poetry.

Despite strong temptation for versification which often manifests itself in oversimplification/surplus use of words or certain over clarifications, Kaifi has tried to be more symbolic, poetically more effective and aesthetically more satisfying in this collection.

In this regard, *Awara Sajde* not only marks a new stage in Kaifi's poetry but in new Urdu poetry as a whole.

Mohd. Hasan

1976 Award

Jan Nisar Akhtar

Khak-e-Dil

Idara-e-Ishaat-e-Urdu, Amroha; 1974; 366 pp.; Rs. 20.00

"Sri Jan Nisar Akhtar, distinguished Urdu poet, was born in 1914 at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. He obtained his Master's degree from the Aligarh Muslim University in 1939 and joined the Progressive Writers' Movement in the same year. He was the Professor of Urdu at Hamidia College, Bhopal, for some time but left the job to join the film industry in Bombay as a lyricist. A recipient of the Soviet Land Nehru Award and the Madhya Pradesh Shasan Sahitya Parishad Award, he had published six collections of his poems. His end came after a heart attack on 18 August 1976.

Khak-e-Dil is considered an outstanding contribution to Urdu Literature for its deceptive simplicity, spontaneous lyrical quality, stubborn optimism and deep social commitment."

Khak-e-Dil, presenting a representative gleaning from the vast corpus of Jan Nisar Akhtar's output up to 1970, reveals that the trauma and thrills of love, a longing for emancipating India from social and economic shackles through Marxist ideology and a firm faith in the advent of the glorious dawn of peace and prosperity form the major oestrum of his poetic afflatus. The book graphs the evolution of Akhtar's creativity from personal amorous experiences, the impact of the Progressive Movement in Urdu literature, the agony of Partition, his anguish at exploitation even after Independencne to a sober, serene vision of the human predicament.

His love-poems throb with an unmistakable authenticity of felt emotions and are free from lachrymal lamentations and effete romanticism. His urge to accept life with all its anguish and agony has purged his love-pangs of all morbidity. Though swayed by the tempo and temper of the creative climate during the Progressive Movement, Akhtar never ceased to be a genuine poet. Even those poems that posit the message of ushering in an era of socialistic equality are keyed in low pitch. In fact, an intimate fervour, saves them from slumping into blatant propagandist literature. Some of his poems with the aftermath of the Partition as their hinterland, reveal the aching lacerations that his psyche suffered when his dreams of a happy, free India were temporarily tarnished by communal carnage. Deriving sustenance from the secular traditions of India, Akhtar used poetry as a potent means of his crusade against all oppression and denigration of human dignity and some of his longer poems are a veritable paean to human grandeur.

The book shows Akhtar's flair for dictional sophistry, musical patterns and technical virtuosity.

Azad Gulati

1978 Award

Yusuf Husain Khan

Hafiz aur Iqbal

Galib Akademi, New Delhi; 1976; 422 pp.; Rs. 25.00.

"Sri Yusuf Husain Khan, distinguished Urdu critic and scholar, was born at Hyderabad Deccan in 1902. He graduated from Jamia Millia Islamia in 1925 and received his Doctorate from

Sorbonne, Paris in 1930. Appointed as Reader in History at the Osmania University, Hyderabad, he rose to be a professor in 1945 and retired as Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University in 1965. He was subsequently appointed Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study, Simla where he worked till 1971. Sri, Khan has published several volumes on Urdu poetry and Medieval Indian history and Culture in Urdu, Persian, English and French. A recipient of literary awards from Urdu Academy, Lucknow, and Sahitya Kala Parishad, Delhi, he is the Vice-President of All India Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu and was awarded 'Padma Bhushan' for his contribution to literature and history.

Hafiz aur Iqbal is considered an outstanding contribution to Urdu literature for its depth of scholarship, high analytical ability, unusual insight into the poetic psyche, and lucidity of style."

Hafiz aur Iqbal by Yusuf Husain Khan is a scholarly treatise dealing with a comparative study of Hafiz and Iqbal. Khwaja Hafiz Shirazi and Mohammad Iqbal are two great lyricists of Persian. Yusuf Husain Khan's analytical study of the points of similarities and dissimilarities between Hafiz and Iqbal is thought-provoking. He has undertaken this remarkable study under various heads including, "Knowledge", "Faith", "Intuition", "Greatness of Man", "Pre-Destination and Free-Will", "Renunciation", "Sermons", "Asceticism", "Mysticism", "Theory of Action", "Mortality and Immortality", "Feeling of Loneliness", "Tulip as a Symbol" and "Mansur Hallaj". He has also dealt with at length the impact of style of Khwaja Hafiz's lyrics on Iqbal's lyrics. Iqbal was impressed by the style of Hafiz and has tried to imbibe his diction is clear from a statement which Iqbal gave to Miss Attya Fyzee in London in 1907 and, later to Khalifa Abdul Hakim in Lahore saying, "When I am in the mood for Hafiz, his spirit enters into my soul and my personality merges into that of the poet and I myself become Hafiz". Iqbal who believed in action lashed out at Hafiz for inaction and the state of drunkenness "preached" through his poetry. In spite of this, Iqbal could not remain unimpressed and uninspired by the charm and the bewitching influence of Khwaja's poetry.

Iqbal has followed the pattern set by Khwaja Hafiz closely in his Persian *ghazals*. Actually in a number of issues including "Love

with all its sweep" both the poets have a common outlook in spite of their minor differences here and there and both find love as a source of inspiration.

Discussing different aspects of their life and art the author has brought out for the first time the differences between the poetic imagination of Hafiz and that of Iqbal and the role their imagination has played in the growth and development of the poetry of each which is in both the cases a happy blend of thought-content and emotion.

Yusuf Husain Khan does not agree with Allama Shibli Nu'mani who says that wine in the poetry of Hafiz cannot be interpreted as spiritual wine, for the obvious reason that the high spiritual status enjoyed by Hafiz is a fact established by history. He was equally interested in what was happening in his country and the Middle East before his eyes and also in the restlessness of the human spirit for the search of something higher, sublter and more real.

In the realm of inner experiences the line of demarcation between transcendentalism and objectivity does not necessarily mean incarnation of the Absolute in an individual being. It is quite plausible that in the case of a genuine mystic, experiences beyond his inner self can take the shape of objective reality. The author has scholarly discussed this issue in the light of the poetry of Hafiz and made it a culminating point for a comparative study of the two poets.

Hafiz aur Iqbal is a valuable addition to the literature already in existencne on Hafiz or Iqbal.

Jagan Nath Azad

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